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# Shakugan no Shana Volume7

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These are the novel illustrations that were included in volume 7





た-14-10

# 灼眼のシャナⅦ

高橋弥七郎

電撃文庫  
Ⓜ  
550

## しゃくがん 灼眼のシャナⅦ

坂井悠二はすでに死んでいた——。

傷だらけの少年・カムシンから借りた  
モノクル  
片眼鏡によって、吉田一美の夢描いた未来は消え、信じていた世界は壊された。

吉田は絶望して、悠二から逃げ出した。  
不気味な花火が打ち上がるミサゴ祭りの  
喧噪の中、彼女はあてもなく走り続ける  
……。

不気味な花火——。それは、“紅世の王”  
たる“教授”とその“<sup>ぐぜ</sup>隣子”<sup>りんね</sup>ドミノが企てた  
“実験”の片鱗だった。“実験”により発生  
した、人を惑わす妖しい波動が御崎市を  
襲う。

その時。シャナは、悠二は、吉田一美  
は——！

奇才・高橋弥七郎が放つ渾身の学園ス  
トーリー第Ⅶ弾！

高橋弥七郎  
イラスト  
いとうのいぢ



⚡ 電撃文庫





た-14-10

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高橋弥七郎

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徹夜明けの陽光を浴びる作者

たかはし や しちろう  
**高橋弥七郎**

今日も元気に大阪人。豆ちしきその4一。いとうのいぢさんの綺麗なイラストは、作者の特権で本になる前に見せてもらえるんやけど、モノクロの挿絵は本になったときのお楽しみっちゃうことで、カラーの表紙と口絵に限られとるんよ。これも作者ローカルの話なんやけどなー。

【電撃文庫作品】

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アプラクサスの夢

灼眼のシャナ

灼眼のシャナⅡ

灼眼のシャナⅢ

灼眼のシャナⅣ

灼眼のシャナⅤ

灼眼のシャナⅥ

灼眼のシャナⅦ

イラスト:いとうのいぢ

最近になって876先生が今住んでる自宅の近所の住人だということを知りました。近所といっても隣町ですが…。でもまだ一度も大阪で会った事が無いんですよ（笑）。ホント謎な人だ。

カバー／加藤製版印刷



# 灼眼のシャナVII

高橋弥七郎

イラスト／いとうのいぢ



Design・Yoshihiko Kamabe



クラスメイト——吉田一美「あ、ああ——」

「吉田、さん……」

「存在亡き者」——坂井悠二

「——うそつき!!」

フレイムヘイズ<sup>えんぱつしゃくがん</sup>「炎髪灼眼の討ち手」——シヤナ







「エエークセレント！ エエーキサイトイング!!!」  
“紅世の王”——教授

「ひははははは……ひようひめ、ひはい」  
“燐子”——ドミンゴ



「……僕は、人間、なんだ……？」

「今ここにいる坂井君が、  
人間だってことを、私は知ってます」



1 始動 …… 11

2 妄動 …… 59

3 鼓動 …… 129

4 激動 …… 187

エピローグ …… 283





# 巻末特別ぶくぶくま

## はじめてのぶくぶく





# 不機嫌 三姉妹

ファミレスでたの...  
接客態度わるそうだな  
2人ですわ...









---

## Chapter 1 - Initiation

Misaki City station is located in the middle of the Central Business District. With several roads leading to it , and a bus terminal located there, it could be said to be one of the largest and most important stations in the county.

From the outside, it appears to be a metropolitan-sized station, common for a typical elevated station -- the tracks are elevated on a wide aisle instead of being laid on the ground. The first level of the station is the ticket gate and the concourse. Moving up the stairs, escalators or elevators is an extended platform on the second level. The railway station, linked to shopping centers and rental buildings, is equipped with the core functions of attracting crowds in front of the station.

Due to today being the annual fireworks festival commonly known as the 'Misago' festival, the crowd volume and density is even higher than usual.

Even when the celebrations have come to the main event --- the shooting of the fireworks, there is still a large number of tourists emerging like an endless stream from the trains, which are operating overtime.

---



There are couples clad in yukatas frolicking around, parents and children dressed in home attire, groups of people who seem like students, even old people can be observed dressed in ceremonial traditional clothes. It can be said that the faces of people of all ages are painted with excitement and delight in anticipation of the activities that are being held on this special occasion.

The reason why they are in no hurry to watch the fireworks is not because they are more interested in other activities. It is simply that no one was able to keep track of time. Regardless of the time or place, few people plan their schedules seriously before attending festivals.

Some people just went on the spur of the moment, some people were just passing by and became interested and joined in, and some people just forgot the time and immediately rushed there. Each with different reasons, everyone is heading towards the festival.

Even when the coming and leaving of people or the construction of the station had changed the surroundings , for decades, this summer landscape persists.

However...

This year is different.

---



It is not the people, the place, nor the things that are different.

But during the festival, some anomalies have appeared

Including the station, including Misaki city itself, a serious distortion has occurred.

This was originally prepared to amend an inexplicable, unnatural and uncoordinated power –people reacting in confusion.

This confusion can be observed with the naked eye, and heard by the ear, as it continues to spread through the sky.

It was originally supposed to be a dazzling fireworks display rendering the night sky, as a large firework continues to spin and twist strangely, flickering in various shapes and colors. Rumbling sounds of different amplitudes due to the delayed explosions continued to be heard.



Next, the more serious abnormal change, in a form that cannot be seen or heard, continued to spread among people.

People were initially startled by a combination of strange scenes and voice, before changing their attitudes after a short period of time. It seemed only natural to cheer, and this is an 'exception to accepting abnormal changes'.

At this time, the next release resulted in another firework which left everyone speechless. But very quickly, everyone recovered and then applauded.

After that, another firework was released. The distorted shape of it left everyone speechless again, but very quickly, everyone accepted it.

The road leading to the festival is still bustling with crowds of people, as everyone in this city continued to move about. For this special occasion, some lively activities were held in conjunction with this anomaly, turning the entire city into one full of noise, excitement and confusion.



The people in Misaki city station, who were preparing to attend the festival activities, looked up when the commotion occurred, and were also startled by the view and the rumbling.

Amidst this, from the crowd located at the central hall of the station stairs, which were making a ruckus for various reasons, came a strange sound.

“Ka-chung-chung...” It sounded like metal rubbing together, accompanied by a slight trail of sound.

In the station filled with voices and hot air, with the occasional breeze of cold air from the air-conditioner flowing, that particular voice was heard, loud and clear.

Shortly afterwards, a voice with a strange accent was heard. By hearing alone, it is hard to tell if the voice belonged to a man or a woman.

“Er er er...”

Place on the central hall of the station, is the mascot symbolizing the osprey festival – a large sized bird decoration on the top of the...

---



---

Suddenly...

A strong vortex of pale green flame appeared out of nowhere.

Under the screams and the watchful eyes of the onlookers, the flame contracted before exploding.

“Finally --- It has started!”

Accompanying this voice that has no sense of tension, appearing near the hall’s ceiling, is a 2 meter tall, gas-barrel shaped, pudgy body that looks like a circular object made of metal, with tubes, gears and other parts protruding to form what looks like hands and feet.

“Ha, ha---! Great, great! Everything’s been set up properly... The professors were right, so for humans, it depends on the methods used!”

With bulging gears functioning as eyes, attached by springs to the top of the face, the same pudgy body is emphatically nodding among the firedust floating in the air. It bent in an unnatural motion, stretched out its long and thin arms to its feet, and picked up a strange object.



It was a strangely carved totem, a manhole cover with a number of screws drilled into it.

“Then, uh- found it! Found it!”

The round object said as it glanced left and right. The eyes, which are gears, were trying to capture a target. The other arm, which was not holding anything, stretched out in that direction.

Its arm stretched to a size seemingly impossible for its exterior structure, and suddenly crashed into the cables attached to the station columns. In an instant, in an invasive manner not damaging the surrounding parts, something which looked like a lump of geometrical blood vessels began to gradually spread and fuse.

Finally...

“—Shhee”

The station amplifier began to air a strange noise.

“---Zzzz ssshhaaa, ah, hello? Hello hello? Test, test, test!”



---

The voice belonged to the pudgy body.

From the platform to the interior of the station, the neighboring buildings and the bus terminal, a dry voice was heard over the speakers, which were set at the maximum volume.

“Everyone, please pay attent-----ion! Good evening! I am the super genius, the pursuer of truth, the king of invention, the philosopher, the creator of architecture, the ‘Crimson Lord’ with domestic skills, the one with handsome eyes fixed with an unshakable vision, the intellectual unsurpassed by those before and after, a “Rinne” of the “Seeking Researcher” Professor Dantalion, the crystallization of his supreme knowledge -- Cantate Domino 28”--!

Of course, people were covering their ears after hearing this deafening and long-winded message through the speakers. There would hardly be anyone listening, let alone paying attention.

The pudgy body – Domino did not care about the reaction of the audience, and went on to say:

“From now on, this construction will become our laboratory. In order to prevent interference with the

---



construction, all humans are to leave the area, or else I will eat you. Be prepared mentally for this-now then, one second before the start.”

Exactly one second later, the pudgy body of Domino split.

An inconceivable number of parts, pipes and wires began pouring out from its small body. Like a toy box which has been overturned, and a spider web spreading everywhere, the parts continued to spread throughout the concourse, attaching themselves to the floor, pillars and ceiling. The areas in contact, like the beam before, began to erode and fuse.

The people packed in the station hall seemed like they were hit by something hard. By now, they finally realized that the strange scenario that they were in was a crisis.

“Wa---! Monsters!!”

A scream was heard, and like a fuse, detonated into panic.

Everyone was squeezing and pushing each other, scrambling to the exit in order to escape.

---



“Move aside! Move aside!” “Mama--!” “Don’t let go!”  
“Stop pushing! Idiot!” “What on earth is that thing?” “  
Wa---!Wa---!” “Ali---!” “Albert---!” “Stop Blocking!” “Wa  
aaaaaa!”

The chaos, caused by the panic of the crowd,  
continued to spread from the station hall to the bus  
terminal, from the barrier to the platform.

However, again...

Like watching a firework that failed to explode, the  
crowd suddenly calmed down.

In an instant, everyone was bemused, momentarily  
stopping for an instant to recall things, before continuing  
their actions as before. Even when Domino is still at the  
center of the station hall, eroding and fusing the interior  
of the station, people were taking the circumstances for  
granted.

“Aiya! The fireworks have been lit!” “Mama, I want  
some cotton candy.” “Ok,ok.” “So it was human...” “So  
pretty!” “Ya.” “Wow, there’s so many people now?” “Oh  
, this station is really crowded...”



The crowd stepped past Domino's pipes and wires, flocking towards the fireworks festival.

"Ah ah do -?"

Domino's shouted into the high-decibel loudspeakers, the shocked people immediately covered their ears.

"There is another strange phenomena besides the function of occupying space? Calming down human anxiety... ... what's going on? Is it the side effect of mixing different tuning methods?"

Domino and its master were making use of a device to control tuning capabilities as part of their plans. However, it had the unexpected effect of calming the crowd down.

In order to deal with this unexpected situation, Domino continued to erode, and fuse several torn-off signboards with broken glass, forming several objects that looked like an exaggerated toothy maw of a huge snake.

"Wow - wow -! Roar Oh -! You humans, hurry up and leave! I'm in a hurry! If you don't move, then I'll really eat you up!"

---



The toothy maws made a rustling sound, raising its neck in front of the crowd to show its sickle-shaped glass canines. In the face of this “new unusual shape”, another wave of panic triggered among the masses, as the crowd rushed out of the station.

"Roar Oh -! I have to repeat myself every time when it gets comfortable, so troublesome. Roar Oh-!"

In this strange commotion, the interior of the station was gradually changing into something different.

A few days ago, at dusk, Kazumi Yoshida met a teenager.

The world has a basic strength to survive ... .. also known as the ‘power of existence’.”

The boy with brown skin and pupils was explaining.

The man-eating demons who feed off this ‘power of existence’ have snuck into this city.



The boy's name was Khamsin Nbh'w, said to be among the oldest Flame Haze. His appearance seemed human, but his abilities are above them.

“Don't worry, my comrades have taken care of them.”

A Flame Haze's mission is to eliminate these man-eating demons secretly.

“Those man-eating demons did a few things to prevent people from seeing them devour humans.”

And he has the initiative to take charge of another special mission.

“It's called a torch, which is the residue of the 'power of existence', disguised as humans who have been eaten.”

That is, the work of repairing the distortion of the world caused by the demons having devoured the 'power of existence'.

“The torch will slowly consume the 'power of existence'. In the end, people will quietly disappear without anyone knowing.”

---



It is referred to as tuning.

“What it means is that, once the ‘power of existence’ diminishes, the person would not have existed in the first place”

Being a native to Misaki City, Yoshida had deep impressions on the city.

"Our comrades are responsible for eliminating these brutal man-eating demons; my job is to clean up the aftermath."

Therefore, she was requested to assist in observing... things that she does not want to see but has no choice but to do so.

“The originally harmonious relationship between people is now lost ever since the man-eating demons started feasting.”

Seeing the human residues ‘torches’ wandering about, her life was completely changed in the face of this otherworldly situation.

“So the distortions that do not occur naturally... once it gets too big, it might lead to a disaster.”

---



And now, in the midst of the noisy crowd at the Misago festival, she saw it again.

“So I travel around the world, to amend and adjust the distorted parts.”

A torch.

Khamsin lent her a monocle that able to allow the user to see the other dimension, ‘Jetatoura’

That torch has an appearance of a youth.

Enjoying happy moments together in this celebration.

She finally had the courage to invite him out.

And planned to confess at the last moment.

She wanted to tell him, “I love you”

The boy’s appearance was that of Yuji Sakai.

Under the over glaring lights and sounds was the riverbank.

---



Packed among the crowd, Kazumi Yoshida and Yuji Sakai were merely a step away from each other.

“Ah, ah.....”

“Yoshida-san?”

Yuji sensed it. Yoshida placed her hand on her chest, her entire body backed away. The distance between each other slowly increased.

While recognizing the abnormal situation surrounding him, is due to the existence of the other dimension that no one from this world could travel to --- evidence of an imminent attack by the ‘Crimson Denizens’ ..... the reaction of the girl in front of him made him even gloomy and even more concerned.

(Why ... ...)

Yoshida expression revealed a sense of trepidation.

(Why would she reveal that expression?)

A quiet and gentle smile should be even more appropriate for this lovely girl.

---



But now it is an expression full of fear.

A deep, strong emotion.

(Why would she reveal ... .. that kind of expression to me?)

Yuji felt that he was thinking nonsense, but it is also very clear that... ..

The thing that made her frightened and tremble was... ..

He understood, but was very reluctant to admit it.

Because of this, he intended to shorten the distance between them, which is also the distance which she pulled between them.

“... Yos-...”

“Well-”

Yoshida sensed his movement, her expression revealing that she was extremely shaken.

Also, there has been an unprecedented blow.

---



“Yoshida-san.....”

Yuji, whose thoughts will become particularly acute during critical moments, realized at this point that the girl was clutching firmly on something close to her chest.

That item, together with her attire- a white yukata with bamboo patterns, a brown sling bag and – did not match at all. And in this era, girls normally would not have this, and it is something which she does not need – An ancient-looking monocle carved with fine patterns.

Yuji had this intuition.

(It's a treasure tool)

This treasure tool, full of mysterious power, is for those related to the “Crimson Realm” to use.

(Why would she have a treasure tool?)

The most important thing is... ...

(A treasure tool in the shape of glasses?)

What kind of impact does this bring to her?

---

Yuji pondered.

(Glasses..... “glasses”?)

Yuji was able to think of the most obvious use of it, and guess an extremely easy answer.

(“Looking at me?”)

Yuji was thinking of heading home, only to meet the lovely girl from his own class. The girl who seemed to have a good impression on him. The girl who was celebrating only a few minutes ago.

However.....

The moment he took a step forward, she took two steps backwards, causing the distance between them to increase even more.

“Yoshida-san...”

“Ah, ah ah-”

Facing Yuji’s call which seemed like a call for help, Yoshida could only tremble and back away.

---



In a festive atmosphere filled with celebrations among the crowd, the space between these two was cold, to an extent of almost freezing.

Yuji could not stand this distance and this sense of cold, preparing to stretch out his hand.

"Yos..."

“Nnnnnnnnoooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo-----  
----- !!”

The girl was most forceful, most determined, but it was a scream of rejection that resounded through this din of celebration.

Abandoning Yuji, who was still stunned by the scream and rooted to the ground, she knocked aside the onlookers who were in shock.

Yoshida fled.

Yuji did not catch up, and could not catch up with the former, he could only stand there ... ..

"Yoshida-san....."

He reluctantly squeezed out his sentence.

Yuji understood.

The feeling of irreplaceable things that could easily disappear in front of them...

Which would be impossible to recover.

It was fear written all over on her shaken expression.

The thing mapped in front of her, was a 'torch'

Yuji was sure that she unmistakably saw it.

The back facing against the night sky filled with lights and sounds was moving closer to her, 'The thing that takes the appearance of Yuji Sakai.'

Yoshida was the object of her own fear, which also made Yuji fearful as well.

The reason why Yoshida had the 'treasure tool of the Crimson Realm'- and the knowledge of 'torches' - was because of chaos that he was unable to cause and unaffected by – All of which he was unable to understand. More importantly, he does not have the

---



energy to catch up. It can be said that he was completely defeated, completely motionless.

The onlookers, who were surprised by the ‘bickering couple’, gradually moved away. A few seconds later.....

“Yuji!”

A person with a voice full of fighting spirit called him.

“-Ah.”

Yuji, who was still in a daze, turned around. In the narrow aisle between some stall, stood a girl who looked like she’s 11 or 12 years old. Like Yoshida, she is also dressed in a yukata. Her normally waist-length hair was tied into a bun. In contrast to her cute appearance, she gives off an overwhelming sense of dignity and existence

.

Of course, this is to be expected. Because the girl is not a human, but a ‘Flame Haze’ with the nickname ‘Flame-Haired Blazing-Eyed Hunter’, contracted to the ‘Crimson Lord’ - ‘Flame of Heaven’.

Her name is Shana.

And Yuji named her as such.

The girl, ignoring the fact that she was wearing a yukata, advanced towards Yuji's position.

Before the festival, she and Yuji had an argument, which ended up with them breaking up.

"Shana....."

The argument just now still bothered Yuji, but as a 'flame haze', the girl did not show any sign of human emotions. She was still dedicated to her mission, full of pride and confidence, like a superhuman. In an indifferent tone unlike just now, she asked:

"Do you recognize 'this'?"

Of course, she was referring to the abnormal changes that were occurring around and above them.

Shana and Yuji have had several experience of fighting against 'Crimson Citizens' invading the city, which was the reason why Shana had enough faith to raise the issue.



In fact, Yuji Sakai is not a human, and thus was fearful when Yoshida found out, but she was mistaken due to some differences.

He is a 'mystes', a body with a treasure tool inside him, and thus makes him different from other torches. The treasure tool is able to interfere with the phenomenon of time, and is called 'Reiji Maigo', a rarity among the rarest. It's a tool that replenishes the 'power of existence' at every midnight to the original amount.

It was due to this treasure tool, that Yuji is able to continue living a normal life, and not like a torch which gradually loses its strength and existence. Not only that, but on the battlefield, he is able to sense 'Denizens' extremely well and the flow of the 'power of existence'. His mind becomes exceptionally clear in the face of an emergency situation, and this virtue has become asset when he is assisting Shana in combat in Misaki City.

The 'mystes' Yuji replied:

"Well... ah... well"

"Do you think this is an attack?"

---

Shana continued asking Yuji, wishing for a form of ‘chemistry’ to be established.

By letting him access the current situation, and then finding an unexpected solution.

Then, he would take action, chasing away the ‘Denizens’ who were jeopardizing the world.

“Although there is no sign of any feeding, but the other party seems to have activated a huge Jizaishiki. Seems like a Seal... or not, like the Aizen siblings that time—”

However, the ‘mystes’ boy did not answer.

It was not the fact that he did not reply, but rather not responding to the ‘chemistry’ that Shana was expecting.

Not getting an immediate response, Shana finally began to wonder:

“Yuji?”

For unknown reasons, he was staring at the crowd attending the festival, his eyes revealing a little fear and confusion. He was not paying attention to the question

---



and explanation, but rather focusing on other issues. Not like the past where he unconditionally made every effort to focus on the task at hand. Now, he had turned a blind eye on everything else, just standing there motionlessly.

Shana realized this, her heart filled with great anger.

“Yuji? What’s wrong with you? What are you dazed about?”

Yuji, while being scolded, did not recover or become ‘normal’, and even made an unexpected response.

“Yoshida-san...”

“!?”

That short sentence was enough to let the girl, a ‘Flame Haze’, experience a strong pain from the bottom of her heart.

Why must I listen to his words? Right in the middle of the battle, fighting together, riding out the storm, and forging ahead. It’s a premise that cannot be entered.

“Yoshida-san knew...”

As if he was still dreaming, Yuji continued on:

“I have to chase after her.....”

He was ready to take a step.

Heading towards the festival where Yoshida disappeared into. Heading towards the daily life with the smile which she had left aside.

“...Yuji.”

“I need to chase after her, to explain everything to her  
—”

Shana obstinately used her voice to interrupt these words and actions that irritated her:

“Don’t worry about ‘these trivial stuff’!!”

The Flame Haze told her assistant.

In literal terms, this seemed to be the meaning.



For the sake of protecting Misaki City and its residents , they needed to take action immediately to stop the ‘ Denizens’, so the matter regarding Kazumi Yoshida must be settled later.

Just by the words, this seemed to be the case.

Of course, this is a response typical of a Flame Haze.

In actual fact, this however was not the case.

Yuji could sense it from her roaring voice.

Together with her voice, was the overlapping of her mood and her desire.

“Forget about Kazumi Yoshida!”

(—she’s .....)

Yuji ‘understood’ her intentions.

“Just stay together with me!”

(What should I say.....)

---

But for unknown reasons, Yuji's heart was filled with an unforgivable sense of anger. His sluggish self evaporated, and turned towards her as if he jumped. With momentum and strength caused by the anger in his heart, he roared at the girl in front of him:

"Shana!!"

"Ah ... ..."

As if she was not angry before, Shana's body curled.

Not only because it was the first time that Yuji shouted at her, but also because she 'understood' that she had conveyed her feelings to Yuji.

"How can you say such a -"

"Urusai, Urusai Urusai Urusai!!"

Shana argued back unreasonably to interrupt him:

"Why must you say these sorts of things in this situation!!"

Her shoulders were moving up and down due to breathing difficulties, but the angry expression on her face.....

“Sha—”

Yuji watched as her expression gave way due to grief.

Facing this predicament, he was taken aback. Shana’s heart was filled with anger, sadness, chagrin and shame. This time, with all her heart, she cried out:

“ ‘Liar’!!”

“!!”

In Misaki City, besides Khamsin, who was there to inform Yoshida regarding ‘the truth about the world’, and Shana, who was with Yuji, there was another Flame Haze.

In the eyes of the Denizens, she is an excellent spellcaster of the Jizaihō, hardened by hundreds of years of battle, and a highly-skilled killer ----- Sometimes, in the eyes of her comrades, she is a berserker who

---



indiscriminately attacks anyone.--- One who everyone is wary of, the "Interpreter of Condolence", Margery Daw. She is now with the owner of her current residence – the teenager Keisaku Satou, and his friend Eita Tanaka near the riverbank where the 'Misago' festival.

She straightened herself up – although that tall figure is well endowed with convex curves, it was not suitable for wearing a yukata. Her plain spectacles revealed the abnormalities in the sky, and the repeating scenes of chaos, when the repeating scenes of chaos ended, the beautiful face revealed a smile of complex intentions.

"Indeed, this world is ever-changing -"

"Hey - Hey, hey! Astonishment, bewilderment, happiness, sadness. They don't appear alone, right?"

A sharp, harsh voice came from the artifact Grimoire, in the form of a large book, tucked under the armpit of Margery Daw. The owner of the voice is the Crimson Lord who made a contract with her, and gave her the powers of the Flame Haze -- "Fangs of Devastation" Marchosias.

The surrounding passers-by, who had no idea where the voice came from, were staring at the group in shock.

---

Of course, Margery ignored it completely. Because there are very few people who have the time and the ability to look into it in-depth. She reached out her hands and grabbed the collar of two people respectively, who were also similarly dressed in yukatas, and pulled them closer to say:

“Keisaku, Eita, I’m going to look for the little shakugan brat or the old tuner, and meet up with them. You two are to head to the ‘Crystal Altar’ and stand by.

Located in one of the levels of an abandoned department store, the group had secretly kept a dedicated wide-area surveillance treasure tool ‘Crystal Altar’. That place is a secret base for Margery’s group in cases of emergency.

The skinny boy who can be called a ‘beauty’ – Keisaku Satou, looked around nervously when grabbed by the collar.

“This..... This is, indeed the doing of the Denizens?”

“I thought they won’t appear again in our life?”

---

The one who made this sharp comment, was a large yet extremely approachable boy - Tanaka Eita. Big and burly, he appeared tense due to his nervousness.

“Shu-,shut up!”

Margery was a little unhappy, and released the hands of the two boys that she grabbed onto a while ago. Due to circumstances, she accepted the help of the two youths who admired her, and only a few days ago, mentioned that she would be leaving tomorrow, even though she knew deep inside, they would be reluctant about it. The reason for her leaving was:

“‘Denizens’ almost never attack the same location twice, and in such a short time, this place has been attacked three times, so the lives of the people here should be safe for a long time. Therefore, as a Flame Haze, there is no need for me to continue staying here.”

However, the abnormal changes occurring in front of them, showed that it was the work of the ‘Denizens’ even without them pointing it out.

“As they say, there is always a loophole no matter how secure it is, even I make mistakes at times!”

---



Margery laughed as she continued with her explanation which seemed a bit far-fetched.

“Hehehe! When the Aizen siblings appeared, you seemed to have said the same thing right?”

“Bam”, Margery slammed on “Grimoire” once, wanting it to be quiet.

"Shut up, stupid Marc! Well, move fast -"

She had taken for granted that the two boys proclaiming to be attendants would obey all orders and finish the job. Because when the ‘Denizens’ attacked in the past, these two were very efficient in their work.

However, today was different.

“We... are the same as before, there’s no improvement at all.”

Tanaka was wishing for a command of higher significance, and said that grudgingly.

Satou was more open about it, even shouting excitedly :

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“Are we really unable to help, that we can only escape!?”

Margery was extremely clear, that throughout these two months, the two juveniles have never intended to quit. In order to continue following her, they were willing to work hard and use any means to accomplish that goal. They were extremely clear that their actions were foolish. Up till now however, not only did they not reach their goal, even her shadow was completely out of their reach.

But ... ..

“... .. Marchosias”

As she said, she placed her hand on the “Grimoire” tucked under her armpit, and in an effortless and graceful movement, took out the book which seemed to be as thick as several sketchpads stacked together, and opened the book in front of the two. The pages looked liked old pieces of parchment, filled with ancient text.

“I don’t really agree with this...”

Margery said this in an uninterested manner, continuing on while gaining the attention of the surprised people.

However, Margery did not care, and pulled out two strips that were caught between the bind between the two pages. At the same time, an ancient text with dark blue glow appeared on the pages. Nearing the end of the text, the glow immediately spread onto the strips.

A “Bam” could be heard, as Margery rudely closed the “Grimoire” and tucked it back under her armpit, holding the strips by her fingertips and showing it to the two boys:

“I’ve just instilled my ‘power of existence’ and several Jizaishiki in these strips. When you reach the ‘Crystal Altar’, stand at my usual position, concentrate and pray ..... How about this, just say the words ‘prayer activation’. Then say “Talk with Margery Daw”, you clear?”

Satou and Tanaka were stunned for a second, then realized it. The two were excited and joyful, using their own greetings to respond to their respected beauty:

“Yes, Margery nee-san! First, ‘Prayer activation’!”

---



“Next is ‘talk with Margery Daw’ right, nee-san?”

Looking at the revitalization of the two snobbery attendants, Margery could not help but reveal a helpless smile, then quickly insert the strips into their shirt pockets, saying:

“Don’t try and act smart, sacrificing yourself in the process.”

Marchosias seemed to have given up as well, sighing as he added on:

“Hey, you two, the reason why you would develop a sense of disharmony in this situation, is because we have been living together for a long time, and have become accustomed to the flow of the ‘power of existence’. The truth ‘is nothing more than this’! Oh, and do not act rashly.”

The duo faced the ‘Crimson Lord’ who revealed a rare expression of serious concern.

"Well, thank you -"

"We will be careful."

---

Both replied while nodding their heads.

Margery waved impatiently while saying:

“Hey, move quickly! No wasting of time.”

“Yes!”

They invariably answered loudly and immediately ran away. They thought that they have no hope, and now that there is an opportunity to help the woman who they have an inner longing and deep respect for, which made them excited. The legs under their yukatas could not wait to get away from the crowd, and run at full speed to their destination – the abandoned department store in front of the station.

After seeing the two boys leave..... Marchosias finally spoke, even though it did not have a mouth in the first place.

“It’s not like you haven’t learned your lesson, what’s the use of trying to involve ordinary human beings into this over and over again?”

“Because... it’s a natural feeling that made me want to do this.”

---

Facing a stern and righteous 'Crimson Lord', Margery reacted like a fractious child, and retorted:

"For me, the motivation to take action is still determined by the mood in the end."

"....."

Margery looked at the bustling crowd beside the two boys through her plain glasses, and continued:

"I signed a contract with you, wanting to chase down and kill 'that guy', staying here all these while doing these things, letting those two do those things; all these were because of my inner feelings within me that allowed me to do all these, my actions rarely depended on logic, but....."

"Ah?"

At the same time when she was hesitant to move forward, with a little bit of sadness, the beauty expressed her true feelings:

"Maybe I have always felt..... that I could salvage a few things."

---



The partner who had been with her for several hundred years continued amidst the sighing:

“My beautiful glass Margery Daw, you’re really a wonderful woman na-”

“Stupid Marco, now should be the time to laugh!”

Bathed in the attention of the onlookers who were attracted by this weird conversation, the heroine brazenly laughed, at the same time tapped on “Grimoire”.

In a short period of time, the city station has completely changed.

With Domino, who has appeared on the first floor, as center, a large number of transformable machinery made from huge pipes and wires filled every corner, and started to develop a strange pulse. The place looked like a castle made from scrap metal, or machinery that has yet to be fitted with an outer covering.

Located on the second floor is the platform, where the crowd had quickly vacated and the train is not operational. There are a lot more parts installed here than

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the exterior. At this point, a sweet ‘ding’ sound could be heard from the central elevator leading to the ticket gate downstairs. Among a thin layer of steam, the elevator door opened towards the platform.

"Ah ah ah ah ah ah!"

Following a weird scream, ‘clank clank’ what rolled out were pieces of scrap metal which seemed to have filled the entire elevator.

Domino’s head unexpectedly popped out from this small hill of metal.

“My hands ~ ah, found it, found it.”

The arms, which were long and slender tubes, protruded out from among the scrap metal, and pulled out the head. Supporting the head weakly were a bunch a fine wires that resembled blood vessels below it.

“O-----kay ~ initial preparations are now complete. Must hurry, before the Flame Hazes arrive.”

Domino mouthed to itself, its arm drilling into the hill of scrap metal looking for an object. Soon after, it pulled out a manhole that has weird carvings and has screws on it, similar to the one taken at the station hall.

He placed this item on the platform as if it was a fragile item, and then put his arm on top of the hood.

"Ah -! Test, test, test! This is 'Crystallization no. 7932' – the messenger, 'Crystallization no. 7932' – the messenger, do you hear me--?"

At this moment, the carved images on the manhole emitted a strong pale green light.

"----Ah! Do--- mino-----!"

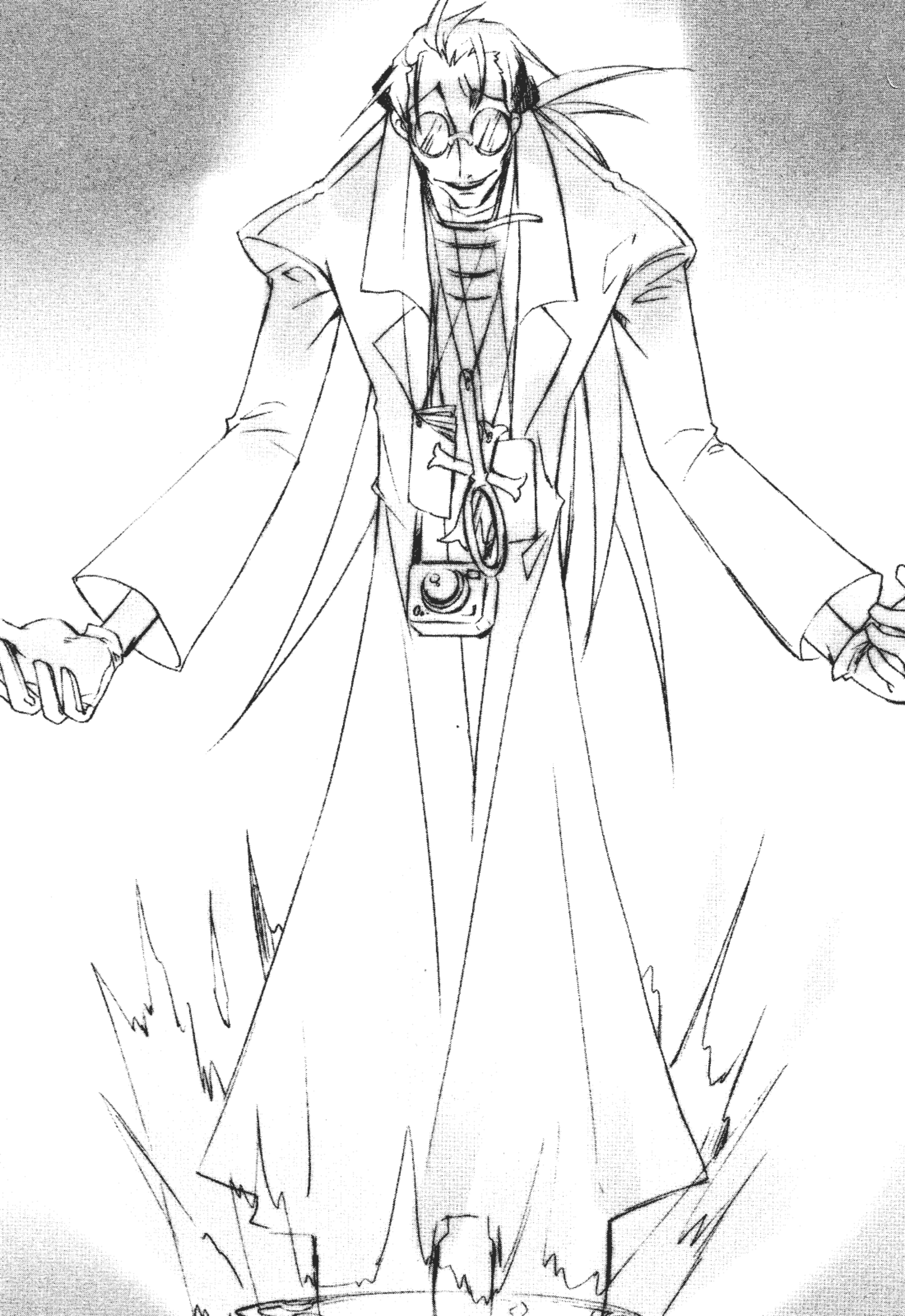
When this extremely high-pitched yet dry voice was heard, a flame of a similar color was seen immediately. After a few seconds, the flames changed into a translucent image that is constantly swaying.

It was a tall and thin wearing a loose robe (in fact, a white robe, but the image only shows shades of green only). Beneath the thick glasses is an exceptionally sharp vision. The entire body seemed to be wrapped up by a

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wide belt-like object, running from the messy, long hair to the interior of the robe. There are several items hung around his slender neck, such as a camera, a pair of binoculars, a notebook, a Catholic rosary, even guns.



Facing this male image that strongly suggests that he is no ordinary man, Domino spoke up:

“Professor, the initial sound has been cut off.”

“.....Do-----mino!”

The voice of the man known as the professor resounded from a cord on the platform, connected to a screw fixed on a heavy circular metal lid. Suddenly, the surrounding scrap metal pieced together into the shape of a robot, which pinched the cheeks of Domino, the only thing left of it is the head.

“Ouuuuuuuu.....ibs burps, sofossor! (Ouuchhhh..... It hurts, Professor!)”

The head supports by the cords has been twisted viciously by the robotic arm that stretched out from the manhole cover. This bizarre scene lasted for a few seconds, before the professor finally released Domino.

“The most important thing is, how’s the assignment --- the present rate of progress--- proceeding?”



He stopped at the points where there is no need to stop, and elongated the points where there is no need to elongated, asking in a weird accent.

Domino used its tube arm to stroke its cheek, while replying in a respectable yet weird tone:

“Yes, uh, the maximum effective range of the Jizaishiki used for interference, together with the basic tools used to measure the output efficiency has been completed.”

“Hoo---uh, your performance has been EXCELLENT, n-oooww, h—ooowwww’s the situation with those mmee—edding Flame Hazes?”

“Ooo-professor, the signals of the opponent are very far away, and will not cause any direct interference. Since we are on the pre-emptive step, and have taken the initiative, then the experiment will undoubtedly be a success ibs vealli burps ibs vealli burps (it really hurts it really hurts)!”

The mechanical arm was twisting Domino’s cheek:

“The meaning of an eexx—periment is, not know-----ing what the results would be liii---kke, that is called an

---

experiment. How many times must I repeat this before you liss---ttttennn, Do---mino!"

"I'b sorbet I'b Sorbet (I'm sorry, I'm sorry)..... does the professor mean that, if the Jizaishiki doesn't activate, we are completely out of options ibs burps ibs burps (it hurts it hurts)!"

The professor continued the cheek of Domino which he had let go a while ago.

"Do you have a sssuussss---pppicion against my Unnnn---restraint Formula? Do---mino!"

"No no, Su-uh oh Do not been bad (no, no, I do not mean that) ... .."

"Forget about these neg---ligible stuff, hhhuuu-----urry up and get to work!"

"Yep (Yes)---! Your subordinate will settle these things at once—"

After a conversion which does not have even a slightest hint of nervousness, the large-scale operation was about to begin.

(Help me!)

Kazumi Yoshida brushed aside the crowd which seemed like there is no end to it, desperately trying to escape.

(Somebody help me!)

She did not care about her yukata becoming messed up, or notice that she was out of breath. She pushed against the crowd in front of her with all her strength, oblivious to their grudging expressions, and just kept on running forward.

In her heart, she was wishing for someone to save her.

However, her body just wanted to run away from everything.

(Let me leave this place!)

She could not stop.

Feeling that as soon as she stop, she will be caught immediately.

Caught by Yuji Sakai --- no, the thing that takes the form of Yuji Sakai.

(Please! Someone! Help me! Save Sakai-kun! Let us leave this place!)

Yoshida could not get rid of the wrong perception that the 'horrible object' was chasing after her.

The problem is not whether 'that object' has the personality and memories of Sakai Yuji himself.

Nor the fact that 'that object' had some happy moments together with her up till now.

No matter what, she wanted to believe that "Yuji Sakai is in front of me"

And the thing that she wanted to protect no matter what: "Yuji Sakai is still alive"

Facing a person with all her heart and desire, only to be easily shattered.

The impact forced her to run away.



(Sakai-kun has..... why Sakai-kun, only Sakai-kun, only "him"!)

‘That object’ might or might not come chasing after her , forcing her to accept the unacceptable reality, and acknowledge the fact that she was unable to acknowledge. It might even force her to face the ‘truth’. This is the most terrifying thing for her.

Yuji Sakai is a torch.

Before anyone know it, it will be extinguished, and disappear from everyone’s memory.

All the feelings that one have will also disappear.

Not willing to accept this fact, Yoshida continued to run away with this thinking.

(No! Nonono! I definitely liked Sakai-kun, why----!)

While she continued to run, while being very confused  
.....

‘Yoshida-san?’

---

A young teenager called her.

“!”

Yoshida heard that voice come from a familiar place, and finally stopped running.

Her classmate Hayato Ike revealed a surprised expression, standing up from one of the stalls nearby. Dangling from his hands are little water polo balls which seemed to be his booty, like a scene typical of an everyday life.

“-Ah, Ike.....”

Yoshida said to the teenager who always helped her out when she encountered difficulties, who was willing to answer all her questions, and who always offered his assistance when there is a need for it:

“Ike, Ike-kun.....”

Seeing her hair dishevelled, her yukata untidy, her pale expression together with some difficulty in breathing, Ike gasped:

“Yoshida-san! You, are you okay!? What happened!?”

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“Ike-kun.....”

Yoshida shouted again, as if she was still thinking about the world before her disillusionment, calling the name of the teenager who exists in her everyday life as her classmate. The sudden inner sense of security, caused the tears to overflow from the eye socket.

This young man is located in a place completely unassociated with that world.

Located in a place where he is completely unaware of its surroundings.

The fact presented in front of her, was far more encouraging to her than the Flame Haze – Khamsin, who could have given some practical help.

“Ike-kun.....”

Once again, calling each other’s names.

Just to obtain a sense of security, even if it is minute.

“The phenomena caused by the side-effects of the tuning, is now confirmed to be due to the pyrotechnic visual

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distortions ~ next, the experiment for maximum effective range of the Jizaishiki used for interference, and the measurement for the output level, has now started!”

Domino announced without any sign of nervousness, its head supported by the cords.

“Largest effective range, confirming all sources of interference, initiating the command for all Jizaishiki, enter !”

In an instant, the ‘power of existence’ warped into a strong glow of pale green, and flowed through everything in Misaki City Station, the cords, tubes, and steel.

The people who endanger the world, ‘Denizens’ and their servants, the ‘Rinne’, have created an inexplicable phenomenon by feeding on the ‘power of existence’ of human beings. This technique of control became the ‘Jizaihō’, the totem showing the initiation of the Jizaihō, while strengthening this power until it crystallizes, creating the Jizaishiki.

Flowing through the entire station, is a large and complex Jizaishiki created to take over a ‘certain object’ located in Misaki City.



“Begin the exx---periment!”

Located underneath the distortion of the fireworks in the sky, the entire Misaki City was--- distorted.

Suddenly.....

Ike, who was standing in front of Yoshida a while ago, disappeared.

Not only that, the surroundings have changed drastically.

"Ah, ah."

Although the stalls on the riverbank are still visible to humans, but it is a whole new place altogether, the surroundings have changed as compared to a second ago

.

The people around her were also shocked and suspicious, looking around from time to time. The friend originally beside her who was licking candy floss, the child who was running forward with a silver balloon, the couple who were happily playing a shooting game, all

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disappeared within an instant. They were all shifted to a completely different area.

"Stop ... .."

Yoshida mumbled, standing there and trembling.

"Hurry up and stop!"

At this time, the wave called calm has struck the people who have discovered the abnormalities and are causing a ruckus trying to look for friends and relatives. Instantly, everyone accepted the abnormal changes, and calmed down. They forgot all about the abnormal changes that has taken place a while ago, and started to look for their friends and relatives in a 'poised' manner. This is a much more eerie scene than the twisting of the fireworks.

In this situation, only Yoshida remembered what has happened, and stood there motionless. Like seeing an illusion of everything in front of her getting tortured and getting mentally crushed by this, Yoshida turned this feeling into screaming:

"STOP ITTTT!!!!"

However, in the eyes of the people around her, she is a 'weirdo'.

The girl was alone, in another world.

Inside Misaki City Station, the results of Domino's first wave of attacks:

"Checking the condition of the maximum effective ranged Jizaishiki. No faulty parts, no incomplete interference, no after-effects in control..... the experiment is successful.

"E - xcellent!"

The professor spread out his thin arms, showing his joy over the success of his work.

Domino also stretched out its tube arms on both sides, clapping by making a clanking sound.

"It's brilliant, professor! The Jizaishiki meant for hijacking a tuner has been completed. Preparations for initiating a interfering-type Jizaishiki is also flawless. Now, the Flame Hazes will not be able to enter the perimeter by one step. Now, shall I continue to proceed

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with the storage operations of our ‘Night Cabinet Party’?  
”

The mechanical arm creakingly stroked Domino’s head.

“Do----mino--- your performance has been excellent. I want to give you a good be—haved baby re—ward, ho—wever the next phase of this experiment ii---ss the main event. We cannot let the Flam---e Hazes get near before that happens, I’ll leave it to y—ou---”

The unexpected reward caused Domino’s gear eyes to spin rapidly, showing a sense of delight. It was full of enthusiasm and answered loudly:

“Yes yes---! Everything will be settled by Domino ----  
Ib purtz ib purtz (It hurts it hurts)!”

The mechanical arm of the professor, which was patting the head a while ago, started twisting Domino’s cheeks again.

“I said that only one answer is enough right,  
Do—mino---?”



“Liar!!”

Shana shouted, but stared at Yuji’s startled face due to her outburst, which disappeared in front of her.

“Yu—?”

Located among a crowd full of panic due to their sudden relocation, she used her instincts to observe her surroundings and situation. There does not seem to be any direct or visible damage, however from the circumstances.....

“It is not a phenomenon caused by the failing of a tuning, but an Jizaishiki.”

A deep, low voice like distant thunder came from a black gem surrounded by a golden necklace, forming a unique pendant which was hanging on the chest.

“Letting people with similar karma switch around. This is the first time that I have seen such a large-scale exchange operation..... what is the purpose of this?”

The owner of the voice is the "Flame of Heavens" Alastor, the one who resides in Shana's body and gave her Flame Haze's abilities. A 'Crimson Lord' who uses this pendant-type artefact 'Cocytus' to express his will.

Up till now, he was silent. Now that he has said something, it means that the situation has gotten into such a critical extent that there is no need to confirm it.

"In any case, it can be confirmed to be the actions of a malicious third-party."

"Well ... ah ...."

Shana lowered her volume, and answered briefly.

As if she was afraid of damaging the current situation.

(Yuji.)

She was clear on what she was waiting for----- waiting for the teenager to come back, pushing aside the crowd who has descended into chaos due to the abnormal changes, calling her name.

Until just an instant ago, she was still blaming him, and he was frightened of her: even when she understood this, she still wants to rely on him. He will do it, definitely..... she was praying in her heart.

(Hurry up and come over, I beg of you.)

However.....

Reality was unable to allow her dependency. For him, the maximum limit for sacrificing one's own mission and *raison d'etre*----which is a few seconds later, the Flame Haze realized something.

The teenager will not appear.

Her own mission has to be undertaken by herself.

The Jizaishiki that occurred a while ago may strike again, or maybe the enemy will attack, cannot waste any more time in this place, got to grasp the overall situation, then think of countermeasurements----

Suddenly, her flow of thoughts stopped.

"- Well ... ..."

---

She could not help but bite her lips.

In this battle of Misaki City, the one who has been playing this role all this while is now absent. The boy whose thoughts become extremely clear in critical junctures, and is able to think of unique battle plans to win, is not around.

The "big liar ... .."

The girl blamed the boy again in a soft voice. Her hand reached for a slip of paper hidden on her torso --- a letter left by the boy before the festival, and stood there motionless.

The chaotic crowd around her was affected by another pulse, and suddenly there was calm.

Alastor, who has sensed this phenomenon and has a lot of questions, asked:

"Shana."

The girl who had a contract with him hid her expressions, and was motivated due to the mission.

"Don't worry."

---



Shana briefly replied as her hand reached out to the two buns tied on her hair.

(Has Chigusa returned home safely?)

Thinking of the lady who helped her tie the buns while humming..... Shana left her with an excuse "I have something on, how about you go home first?" , and could not help but worry a bit. But she released the buns without hesitation, and the black, straight hair whipped and flew in the night breeze and lights of the festival.

The lonely girl stood again, half saying to herself:

"No worries, it's the-- same as a while ago."

"What... what the heck?"

Tanaka was shocked by the completely opposite change in the scene as compared to a while ago.

"Where is this place.... Where's Satou?"

Looking around, even the friend who was originally running together with him has disappeared.

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(Instant teleportation? Is this another Jizaishiki of the ‘Denizens’?)

The tall and large body clamored over the buzzing crowd, using the unique features of the overlooking embankment and the angle of the metal bridge to confirm his location. Fortunately, he was not teleported far away.

(Satou and I actually got separated... Doesn’t matter, the destination is still the same.)

After calming down and becoming wary of the surroundings, he did not notice any ‘Denizens’ attacks or any unusual forms.

Although the locations of the stores and people have been jumbled up, creating a chaotic scene, there is no sign of danger.

(Let’s just wait for that strange pulse to strike again, everyone will soon be quiet.)

Tanaka emboldened himself, waiting for the next action.

The unsecured youth looking for his friends, calling their names, the mother who is looking for her missing child, the girl who was panic-stricken and started shrieking, the store owner who is pushing the crowd aside to get back to his store, and so on. In the midst of the different sounds and actions that showed both panic and fear, Tanaka just stood there and observe.

Less than a few minutes ... ..

(It's here, it's here!)

The mysterious pulse passed through bodies in an instant, and it felt like listening to a very loud sound.

Then, right on cue, the people immediately calmed down, some were looking for their missing companions, some were focused on the festival activities, this wonderful phenomenon seems to repeated over and over again.

"Good!"

Tanaka shouted silently, and finally started to take action. Because it was more inconvenient to move about within this chaotic crowd, and he wanted to calmly

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assess his position. He was praying that the dangerous situation where the enemy attacks will not happen, and running away at the same time.

Unexpectedly, a girl dressed in a yukata and a mask appeared out of nowhere.

"Well wow?"

" ..... " " ... .. "

The girl was standing right in front of him, causing him to suddenly stop in shock. The upper face was covered by the toy mask, leaving the lower face unmasked, a fine and soft shoulder line, a sense of familiarity, Tanaka's instincts told him who this girl is.

It was his classmate, Matake Ogata.

"Og... Ogata-chan, so it's you, have you come to attend the celebration?"

Tanaka was originally wary about the situation around him, and is now puzzled by the sudden emergence of the other party. He inquired:

"Are you alright...eh...oh yeah!"

---

He could not help but express his concern for the other party's safety, only to realize that now was not the time to do that. He does not have the time to chat with her, and thus he was prepared to give a brief explanation before leaving.

"Sorry, I have some urgent business to take care--!?"

Ogata pulled the sleeve of his yukata.

"Hey, you ... .."

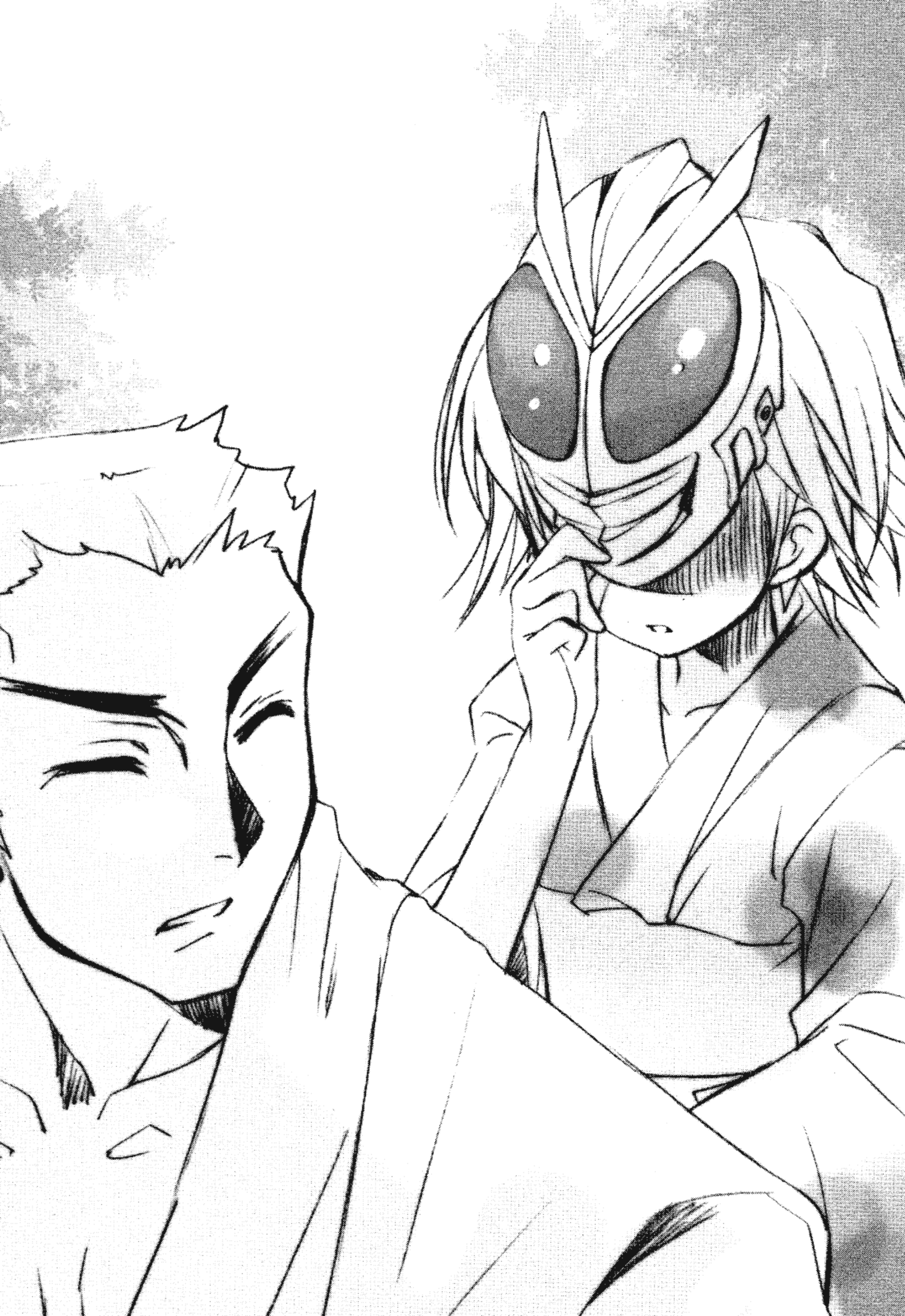
"Who were those people just now?"

"Ah?"

Tanaka was planning to pull his arm away, before stopping halfway.

Underneath the mask that Ogata was wearing, from the lower part of the face that was exposed, fear and nervousness could be seen from the trembling and tension of her mouth. She made every effort to hang onto Tanaka's sleeve tightly, and went on to ask:





“Who was that foreigner with you just now?”

“Oh, that is---wait a minute, this is not the time to ask this!”

Subjected to embarrassment due to being seen by a ‘good friend’, and the anxiety over the need to handle the emergency as quickly as possible, Tanaka tried again to let go of the girl’s hand:

“Any.....anyway let me go first, I need to rush somewhere—”

“I’m asking you who is that person!”

Seeing Ogata being unruly (what he feels) and pressing on, Tanaka could not help but get angry:

“Ogata-chan, don’t stay here as well! Hurry up and go home!”

The second sentence was meant as a voice of concern in the face of this dangerous condition, but to the unsuspecting Ogata, it seemed that he was trying to get away from her.

"No! Hurry up and tell me!"

"You are so irritating!"

Tanaka was also beginning to feel impatient. He saw that the girl in front of him was wearing a mask the entire time, and felt that the girl was purposely pestering him, thus he intended to remove the mask.

"!!"

Ogata could not help but to hold the mask down with both hands.

Her extremely nonsensical attitude was finally getting to Tanaka, who finally yelled:

"Ogata-chan! I'm really angry now!"

"- Well, hum ... ..."

"Ah?"

When he realized that he got the meaning completely wrong, it was too late:

"Wah ah ah ah ah ah....."

---

"Ah, wait....."

Ogata held onto the mask and burst into tears, as droplets of tears dripped down from the lower half of her face.

Bathed in the gazes of the crowd who were half laughing away, Tanaka was extremely nervous, not knowing what to do. He could only shake his sleeve uneasily as she hung on to it tightly.

"Well, how should I say this. Sorry, Ogata-chan."

(Aiyo---- really, I am the one who really wanted to cry!  
)

Rethinking about his decision again, he was trying very hard to appease the crying girl.

"I don't know... ugh, what just happened, anyway, don't cry."

Although the the way of comforting was rather clumsy, Ogata finally stopped crying.

"Ogata-chan, about that..... how should I explain it..."

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To begin with, Tanaka was not the talkative type in the first place, so he easily gave up trying to explain, and did what he felt was the most appropriate action.

Never mind, I will send you home, be obedient and go home for today."

Ogata's tone was that of helplessness, with no hint of her normally vibrant tone, and replied while sniffing:

"But.... but then---Satou-san, Ike-san, and, and everyone else....."

"Its not as if they are children who are unable to get back once they are lost, going home on their own in the middle of a festival is also quite common, come on, don't think too deeply into it, lets go."

The biggest concession that Tanaka made, was to allow Ogata to hang onto his sleeve while guiding her.

(Currently, the 'Denizen's have not attacked here yet, no idea which place is safer, here or home, but now Ogata-chan is like this, I cannot just leave her like this.)

While thinking, they started to move away. Of course, they cannot run, but they could still walk from the

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riverbank to the embankments. The girl whose shoulders were still trembling slightly forcibly tugged onto his sleeve, and followed closely in tottering footsteps.

"I am really in a hurry, sorry."

"Well ... ah ...."

To see him specially apologize, Ogata gently nodded her head.

(If that Jizaishiki used to switch the locations of everyone were to appear again, I hope that we will not get separated.)

Taking into account the girl who unexpectedly showed her weakness, Tanaka prayed silent in his heart, but his eyes were fixed upon the destination they were moving towards.

People were curiously looking at Yoshida, knees bent on the ground, weeping and choking, yet they continued to trot forward.

At this point, a woman clad in yukata stepped away from the crowd. She bent down, and placed one hand on

the shoulder of the girl who was trembling due to sadness.

"Are you..... Yuji's friend?"

"... .. Huh?"

Yoshida wore a cautious expression, and turned towards the owner of this familiar voice. Under the lights of the festival, which seemed to be blurry due to the tears , a seemingly familiar lady with a gentle smile appeared.

The trembling lips finally managed to etch out a voice.

"You are..... Sakai-kun's mother...?"

The lady---Chigusa Sakai used her hand, originally on Yoshida's shoulder, and pulled her up.

"Do you know who I am?"

Chigusa smiled again..... then inquired:

"---are you Kazumi Yoshida?"

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## Chapter 2- Reckless action

Keisaku Satou broke away from the crowd on the road leading to the Misago festival, and continued forward.

A sudden, mysterious force separated him and Tanaka, transferring him to an unknown location in the middle of several street vendors. He then ran forward, wanting to complete the task handed to him by Margery.

He must head to an abandoned department store building called Yoda, which is located in front of the station, reach the level where the Hogu 'Haridan' is hidden, and recite two sentences.

(Damn it, this is so frustrating.)

Faced with a crowd that came from who knows where, filling the entire pavement, the teenager continued on, grumbling occasionally, and being complained at times as well.

He did not realize the seriousness of the situation while at the riverbank, only to discover the vehicles, which were moving in different directions, were caught

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in a mess due to being unable to move forward or backwards. Looking at it closely, even the vehicles have changed locations.

Some of the cars collided against the guardrail, causing serious traffic congestion, coupled with the onlookers surrounding the scene of the accident, caused the sidewalks to be even more packed.

(On the riverbanks, the people have swapped locations . Is the swapping on the roads done on the vehicles?)

Satou thought of a seemingly muddled up theory, that the Jizaihō that occurred just now is able to switch people with similar positions, together with their belongings and vehicles. He continued to move through the crowd for a few minutes, heading towards landmark for those located in front of the station, familiar to those who frequently travel at night.

So that's it.

"Huh--?"

The distorted appearance of the structure concealed by the skyscrapers shocked Satou momentarily.

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(What's going on? Is that the station.....?)

Misaki city station has completely changed.

The station, with broad elevated railways growing, has steel frames growing all over it, covered with wires and winding pipes. At first glance, the structure seemed to be jumbled up, but an overall view will give a feel of its capabilities and intentions. It resembles a huge artificial cocoon.

Seeing this strange sight, Satou unconsciously glanced right and left, thinking whether the 'Denizens' (In his imagination, their appearances would resemble those of monsters in a show) would be hovering nearby.

(Where is the enemy? Are they not here? Then why isn't anyone making a ruckus?)

The people on the crowded pavement have repeatedly done some abnormal actions since a while ago --looking up at the fireworks in the sky in awe, and then regaining their poise. It seemed that everyone has taken the appearance of the station as "it was before".

(Even so, there has to be a limit!)

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Satou continued on, harboring a feeling similar to anger, which was not directed to anyone in particular.

The enemies of the Flame Hazes, who he greatly respected, are frightening existences that could not be explained completely by common sense. Witnessing the threat of the 'Red World' has deeply made him realize this.

Finally, there was a wide cross junction in front of him. By crossing a road and making a turn, one can see the staircase leading to the underground street.

In order to turn the abandoned Yoda shopping center into a secret base, they replaced the door locks without permission, and the entrance to the main gates is located at the end of the underpass, which has very few pedestrians.

(Has Tanaka reached there already?)

Playing with the keys in his pocket, while looking straight ahead, the traffic lights have already turned red.

On the road, the vehicles were misplaced; drivers were honking at each other, each struggling to get back to the original direction they were heading to, but only

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resulting in traffic jams. In addition, the drivers grumbling could be heard together with the honks, making it extremely noisy.

The pedestrians, who were not directly involved in this uproar, were walking on the pavement and in a calm and collected manner, complied with the traffic rules and staying away from the vehicles, occasionally climbing over the engine hood or the roof of the cars. It was a very unusual picture.

Satou was waiting for the traffic lights to change. In the midst of this chaotic traffic jam, he still did not dare to jaywalk.

Because it was the crosswalk in front of the station, the waiting time is extremely long.

(That is the enemy to us humans... has Margery nee-san reached that place yet?)

While anxiously waiting, Satou glanced to the other side of the road.

The strange structure located there, was the completely deformed Misaki City station, which although has been covered by an excess of items, did not

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lose the basic design of a station, the position of the lighting has not changed as well, like a scene in a normal night. Because of this, Satou was able to feel the erosion of the common scenarios, the invasion into everyday life.

However, the people around did not feel any sense of crisis, viewing the building as a landscape. This is the world where the lack of coordination causes fear in the hearts of the people.

Suddenly, in this midst of this undisturbed state, blinded by his obsession, he thought of an idea:

(If there is no danger..... is it possible to look at Margery nee-san's battle?)

Satou was naturally inquisitive, but soon gave up on this foolish idea. Margery's order was to get to the safe zone, then get in touch. The order cannot be delayed, let alone defied.

(However, this would be similar to yesterday..... no, similar to what has been done up till now)

The moment before Margery left, the 'Denizens' came out to attack.

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So he thought, this is the last chance that heaven has given them (or 'him') to get stronger, in order to continue his journey with her.

Abandoning the negative image of hiding in the secret base, shivering in fear and waiting for Margery to come back; this was an unconscious act to violate orders.

(The reason Margery nee-san "abandoned" us..... are we to just hide, unable to do anything else?)

His inner thoughts were no longer temptations. In order to justify his actions and calm the anxiety within him, he started to look for excuses for the actions that he would take.

(Even if I did not go to the 'Haridan', Tanaka should be.....)

The image of his friend conjured in his mind. If they were to do it together, then after some debate and tussle, there would be no hesitation that the duo would head to the base.

However, they got separated, leaving him alone. The fact that he got separated from his friend caused Satou to have a childish yet urgent desire of 'heading to the battlefield'.

The competitive nature to be on Margery's good side definitely exists.

He was certainly angry that the monsters were attacking the city he lives in.

Because there was a sense of intoxication once his anger stimulated him to fight.

Nevertheless, the main reason was the competitive spirit between him and his friend, who was on the same side as him.

His friend—Eita Tanaka could lift a heavy sword that he could not even move, even if it was a little lift. In his attempt to get the glory and fell sick as a result, Tanaka chuckled and indicated that he understood. In turn, he was envious that when he was sick, Margery was there to take care of him (he thought), even when the two were living under the same roof.



The sense of inferiority and weakness within him prompted him to take action.

He wanted to get onto the battlefield first.

It was an overly sweet desire, capable of rendering people hapless to it. The calm and collected decision that 'It's useless even if he were there' was drowned by it.

In his eyes, the traffic light leading to the original destination—the secret base--- turned green.

“...I can also...”

Satou stood there, motionless, muttering to himself while gazing at the traffic light.

Everyone seemed to think he was blocking their way, so they avoided him in order to get across, the traffic lights began to blink.

When it turned red again, he was no longer there already.

Shana continued to run, her long hair flapping in the wind.

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She ran into the alley behind the vendors—to the people nearby, it was a dead end, to the people far away, it was a location that could not be seen. Her flaming hair and blazing eyes were sparkling in the midst of the firedust. It was a red hue that would make a deep impression on the viewers.

She towed the lights in mid-air, touching them with her foot before leaping.

In a moment, the figure fused with the night sky and was covered by the black coat of 'night', wings made of flames forming on her back, bringing the girl into the sky .

Like a meteor heading from the ground to the sky, the Flame Haze "Flame-Haired Blazing-Eyed Hunter" unveiled her wings and soared.

In the sky filled with the brightness of the fireworks, she was looking for the other Flame Hazes in this city. No matter the objective of the opponent, she must first obtain all the information that she can get.

"... ...!"

After a few seconds, Shana found the other two.

Because the location she was able to identify, were emitting two different types of flame, dark blue and brown respectively.

The location was the large bridge that divides Misaki City in two, crossing the Shinan river—Misaki bridge. More accurately, it is located on one of the beams across the road, forming an 'A' shape and anchored by a sling. On top, two different colors of flames have been lit.

(That is.....)

The reason why they chose this place is that this stretch offers the best view, and unlikely to disturb others. An appropriate choice.

However, when Shana saw that place, her heart began to ache.

That place was where she fought the last battle against the 'Denizens', the 'Aizen' siblings.

The place with memories filled with intensity, fighting spirit and enthusiasm.

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The teenager who was with her at that time is now not present.

Just this minor fact was enough to render her chest uncomfortable.

(Now—yes, I only need to concentrate on completing the mission.)

She tried to convince herself as she approaches the top of the main tower, where there are two figures of different sizes, one tall, one short. The duo put out the flames on their hands, which seemed to act as a guide.

Shana took the chance, folded her wings, and landed in front of the duo.

"Too slow!"

The one who greeted first was "Interpreter of Condolence" Margery Daw. She rolled the bottom of her yukata to the knees, and tied the sleeves, this act did not match her sexy and attractive image. The purpose was presumably to prevent the wind from unraveling her yukata.

"Hey--hey, hey! We only just arrived a minute ago... Poof!"

From the divine artifact 'Grimoire' tucked under her right armpit, the "Fangs of Devastation" Marchosias said in a joking tone, only to be smacked.

Shana ignored the two-man act, and turned to the other Flame Haze, the juvenile standing there, who was emitting a powerful and calm atmosphere. Remembering this evening, when she exposed her ugly side for the first time, she did not know how to initiate the conversation. Even so, being a Flame Haze, she mustered herself, and calmly asked.

"... .. What is the situation now?"

"Ah ah, even though I'm not very sure ... .."

The youth replied in a child-like voice that lack innocence.

The figure which looked even smaller and younger than Shana was wearing long-sleeved pants, his facial



features hidden by the hood that extends to his eyebrows , a long and thick bat slung on his right shoulder, this attire certainly seemed weird.

The youth was "Mobilizer of Ceremonial Equipment" Khamsin.

One of the world's oldest Flame Haze, once deeply feared for his violent and brutal way of fighting, now works as a 'Tuner', responsible for restoring the world that has been damaged by the 'Denizens'

"My guess... is that this is the result of one of my tuning Jizaihō being interfered by something."

"So it means, that this distortion and the thing that caused the people to accept this phenomenon, is caused by someone tampering with your tuning Jizaihō or a Jizaishiki?"

Although in different fields of work, as another Unrestraint specialist, Margery inquired.

"Um, it seems to be the case, in fact, we have an idea which 'denizen' would do such a thing."

This hoarse reply, came from the 'Crimson Lord' which Khamsin had a contract with-- "Steadfast Sharp Peak" Behemoth. He expresses his view by the Hogu "Sabia", a bracelet strapped from the middle finger of the boy's left hand to the interior of the sleeve.

Shana did not like to beat about the bush, so she directly asked:

"According to your view, who is the mastermind behind the attack?"

Khamsin's reply was also brief:

"Ah ah, it's the "Seeking Researcher" Dantalion ..... you should have heard of him?"

"... .. It's 'professor'."

"Oh, so that's why it felt weird."

Shana and Alastor expressed their worries through their own statements.

Most of the 'Denizens' who came to this world are those who "live the way they want, and get what they

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want", loyal only to their beliefs. A stark contrast against extreme existences called 'Crimson Lords', who made a contract with several humans, making them 'Flame Hazes', are known for their straightforward and rigorous personality (of course, there are exceptions like Marcosias).

Among them, a professor—that is the "Seeking Researcher" Dantalion was even more immersed in his desire for the strange and beliefs, a "Crimson Lord" who is famous for being extremely eccentric.

As one who has appeared in the human realm for a long time, he was willing to bet on his entire existence in order to carry out his research and experiments on this world and the "Crimson Realm".

One of the main reasons why he became one of the main obstacles, is because it was impossible to determine his motives. The form and target of his desires are ever-changing. To the 'Denizens' actions, he would sometimes not interfere, sometimes even making things worse.

Only he would understand the significance of all these, according to testimonies, sometimes even he himself do

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no understand. He was once hired by a certain “Crimson Lord” to participate in a weird plan of his. After that, when he decided to carry out his own experiments, he killed that “Crimson Lord”. He was once entrusted to strength the Hogu of a Flame Haze, and carried out the same strengthening process on several ‘Denizens’, causing huge losses on both sides. He was the cause of the birth of several Flame Hazes, and even among the ‘Denizens’, there were a few who hated him to the core.

His experiments are not limited to Jizaihō or Jizaishiki, they include Hōgu, the structure of the world, occasionally involving humans, ‘Denizens’, Flame hazes, the targets often changing with his inconsistent, erratic mood.

If tonight’s events were caused by his actions, then his objective would be “too large, and therefore unpredictable”. From the act of incorporating interfering type Jizaishiki which causes the strange phenomenon, it seems like the simple objective of feeding on humans would not be enough to explain this. This type of opponent is a lot tougher to handle than ordinary ‘strong enemies’.

“No—but ar, don’t anyone feel strange about this?”

Marchosias asked in a tone that does not seemed very dignified.

“He has created such a large Jizaishiki, and yet we can’t even sense a single trace of that stupid king of inventors.”

Margery slightly slackened her jaw, and agreed:

“You’re right, creating such a large Jizaishiki at one go, we should definitely be able to sense him, like the ‘Aizen siblings’, when after activating the Jizaishiki, they exposed themselves.

In the midst of the strong night wind, the beautiful Unrestraint specialist was standing on the top on the main tower, overlooking the night scenery. The chaos on the roads and the crowds of people being packed like sardines can clearly be seen.

However, in contrast, at the same time the mysterious change occurs in Misaki City, only a slight atmosphere change could be detected, causing the Flame Hazes to be unable to determine the situation.

Not only that, even the person who arranged this entire incident (the worst thing, the "Seeking Researcher"

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Dantalion is a powerful “Crimson Lord”) was unable to sense the strange disturbance that his servant is causing -- the rinne called Domino. This situation caused them to feel uncomfortable, as if there were some minor details hidden.

Then there is another risk factor.

Misaki City was the victim of a large scale Jizaishiki attack by the ‘Denizens’, the ‘Aizen siblings’, only a few months ago.

At first, it seemed that the current scenario resembles heavily to that situation, but there is a decisive difference

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There is no Fūzetsu set up.

The Jizaishiki that the ‘Aizen siblings’ set up in the entire Misaki City is a large scale Fūzetsu, a separate world independent of the operation of the world. In this space, no matter what kind of battle, everything inside could be restored by patching everything and restoring them.

No such luck in this case.



There is no way to repair the damage, people cannot be revived, it is now considered a fight outside the Fūzetsu. Of course, if there is a need, it is possible to set it up from here, but...

(The timing and target, as well as the small chance of winning this battle, is there a – uh.....)

Why am I thinking so much? Margery thought regarding herself.

No matter how much the destruction, how many lives are lost, why should she care? Her sole purpose is the annihilation of the 'Denizens' only...this should be, this is precisely a top-notch killer among the Flame Hazes, the "Interpreter of Condolence", the equivalence of fear, or even death, to the 'Denizens'. However...

(Emotions? Never thought that I would say such emotional words.)

The present her now feels that this city is not so bad after all.

Not only that, but the idea to protect it.

Even if she has intended to leave the city tonight.

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As a big sister, she would normally be worried about the two attendants who should be moving right about now.

(Have the two arrived there yet?)

The strange occurrences caused by the recently activated Jizaishiki would only cause two things of similar cause and effect, in this case, switching the locations of people in similar positions, so there should be a need to panic.....

“Hehehe! If the enemy wants to pull some tricks, he would have to expose himself in the end, as long as we take the opportunity to settle everything in one go, wouldn’t all the problems be solved altogether?”

Margery could not help but refute Marchosias rash comments.

“Stupid Marco, haven’t you heard of the phrase ‘It’s too late’?”

"Ah ah?"

"Ah."

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Once she spoke, she felt anything but reassured. This is nothing like the style of "Interpreter of Condolence". Thinking of the consequence of saying the wrong thing caused her to feel slightly unprecedentedly disturbed, but her partner laughed:

"Hey - Hey, hey! Is heaven going to deliver red rain? That sounds like what a Flame Haze would say! My decent model student, Margery Daw----!"

Just when she was hesitating about whether she should relax or be violent, Khamsin spoke up.

"Ah ah, the "Interpreter of Condolence" view is correct . Especially this time with "Seeking Researcher" involved. If we were to sit back and observe his actions, it will only bring about an unimaginable amount of danger. In short, we need to find out about his motives, or his location, before he decides to take action.

"Hoo, will the enemy take advantage of the situation after they have created such a large Jizaishiki, and come out to provoke us? This is another question to think about..... , "Flame of Heavens", what do you think?"

Behemoth's question was not directed to Shana, but to the old comrade who expresses his will from a pendant on her chest.

The reason why he did not ask the Flame Haze, who is the main partner, was because everyone could see that the girl, who was silent throughout and was only listening to this conversation, was feeling down. The experienced 'Crimson Lord' could tell that she was pretending to be calm.

However, Alastor rejected the good intentions of this old hero without hesitation.

"I'm only responsible for supporting the decision of the partner, you just need to ask the kid herself."

"Alastor....."

Shana felt the demon king, who lives and dies together with her, rebuke his severely depressed partner. While feeling ashamed, she made an effort to raise her spirits, and revert back to the side which is burdened with the mission of the Flame Haze.

So Behemoth turned and asked her:

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“Uh huh, so now I ask again, o "Flame-Haired Blazing-Eyed Hunter", how should we respond in this situation? Do you have any suggestions?”

Shana responded with a short question:

“Excuse me, do you know what is the structure of the mechanism that causes people to switch positions?”

Khamsin nodded under the hood:

“Ah ah, let me explain..... the opponent should be using the blood of Kadesh-- also the Jizaishiki that we use for tuning. The original purpose of this is to cause a positive harmonious change by recombining it, but looking at the situation now, the control over this power has been lost completely.”

He spoke in a calm tone, his posture suggests that he was going to arch his shoulders.

“I didn’t expect the "Seeking Researcher", a “Crimson Lord” with such a strong spirit, to be able to do the two difficult tasks of occupying and controlling in such a

short time, while we were unable to sense him..... all of a sudden I couldn't believe it, what methods is he using?"

Behemoth quipped from Khamsin's left hand.

"Uh huh, we have heard of rumors in the Crimson Realm that that guy was going to disrupt the tuning process, but have completely no idea of what he was going to do. Now that we are seeing this scenario unfold, it is truly regrettable."

Shana was not interested in the sequence of events, rather, she was only thinking of appropriate countermeasures to this situation.

"Well, as long as we destroy that Jizaishiki, not only will the unknown objectives not be accomplished, the mastermind would also have to show up right? The tuning can be done again after that."

Khamsin nodded again, this time even his actions seemed heavy:

"Ah ah, if it could be done, it would not be any better."

Margery revealed a puzzled expression.



“What does that mean? That Jizaishiki was set up by you two right?”

She thought that the method to do this should be similar to the battle with the ‘Aizen siblings’, to destroy the enemy’s trump card.

“Ah ah, no, this is just pure speculation. That “Seeking Researcher” is not going to allow people to destroy the blood seal that forms the core of the mechanism easily.”

“Ho huh, after the strange change occurred, the synchronization between the blood of Kadesh and us has been removed, and if we were to think of possible locations while destroying things as we go around the city, we would likely be impeded by the opponent’s Jizaishiki.”

“In contrast to the two tuners’ pessimistic ideas, Shana immediately gave an optimistic view.

“Through the area that this large Jizaishiki occupies, we can predict the centre location ..... most likely to be lurking with enemies, right? Carry out a search in that area, then a practical test to see if it would be obstructed by the Jizaishiki, like the switching type. The place where

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it is obstructed with shows where the enemy is, and should be very effective in affirming the enemy's purpose or methods."

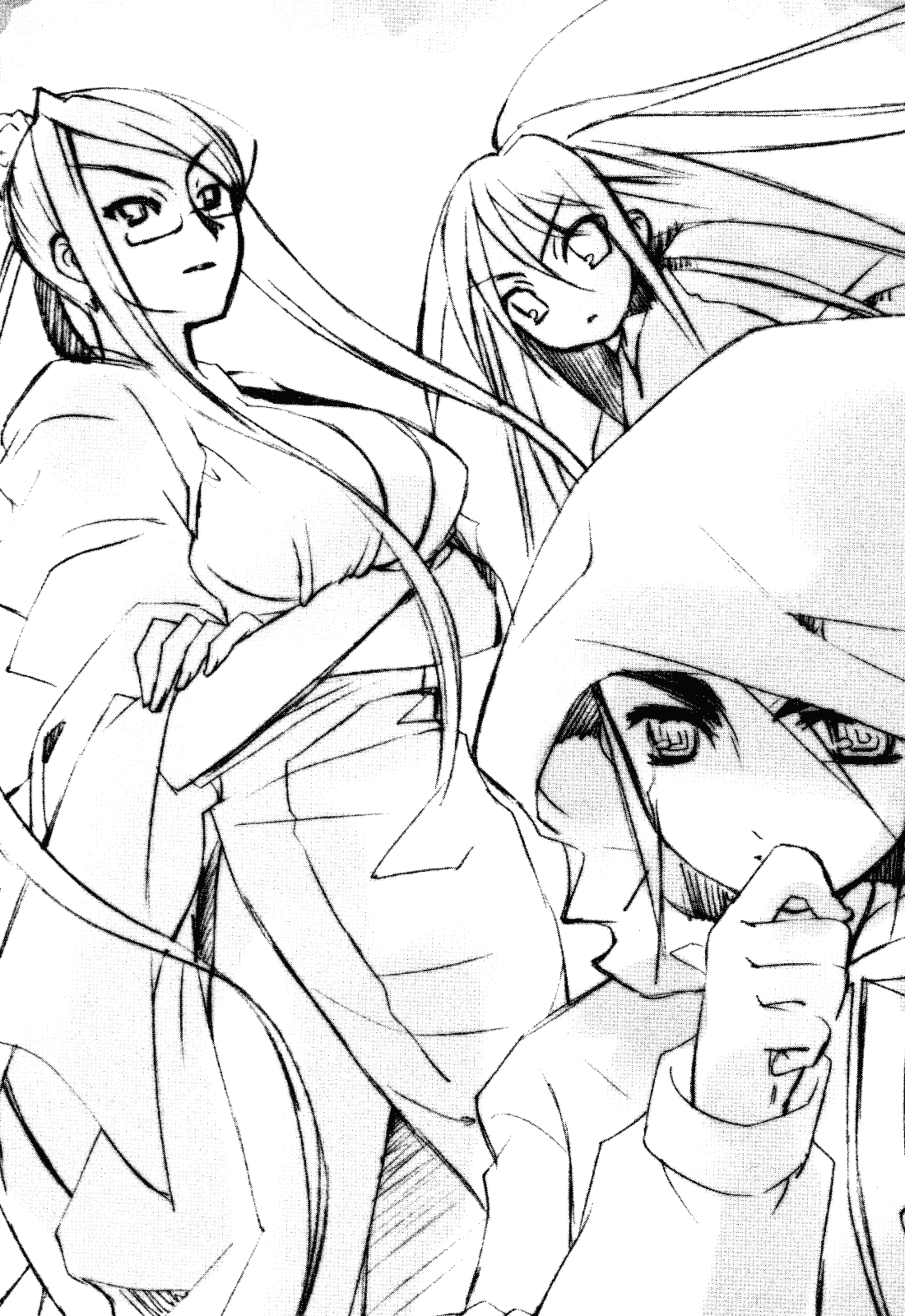
"You're right--- this is all we can do now. To smoke the prey out of hiding, then slaughter him. It is the most basic of basic approaches, heh heh!"

Marchosias's view might be too brief, but in practical countermeasures, this is the only way.

Margery nodded as well, then let the Hogu 'Grimoire' float in mid-air, then she sat on it. This is her usual preparations for departure.

"You're right, besides standing here, remaining silent and being unable to come up with ideas, directly taking action suits my personality better. By the way, old man, can you find the centre of this large Jizaishiki?"

The two tuners did not mind being called old men, and nonchalantly replied:



“Ah ah, we can sense it. The answer is very simple.”

“Uh huh, it is located at the stretch from the crowded station to the main road in the business district.”

Shana nodded her head upon hearing the instructions, then she unexpectedly said this.....

“Then I’m leaving.”

And leaped from the main tower into the sky. In a location slightly below, the crimson red light turned into a straight line across the night sky.

Margery did not stop the girl who took a preemptive step, just muttering her thoughts to herself:

“What is that girl worried about?”

Flame Hazes normally work alone, unless the situation calls for teamwork. Because most of them are fighting for revenge or naturally have a maverick personality, it is not appropriate for them to work together. Like today’s gathering, which was only an exchange of information, and taking ‘their own actions’ according to the analysis and conclusions.

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“Look—she's dressed up so nicely, must have left in the middle of a date, heh heh!”

“Eh? Now that you mentioned it, where did that brat go?”

Margery replied to the sharp observations of her partner, while thinking like a typical Flame Haze at the same time:

(A rare chance to show off, I have a ‘Haridan’ that can see through the structure of the Jizaishiki.....)

Mainly because there was no contact between her and the two attendants, she lost a great opportunity. Luckily, besides that Jizaishiki which swaps positions, there was no serious killing aura around, though by the looks of things, they have not reached the destination yet.

“Okay, never mind, the target is also located in front of the station, I’ll bring them to the ‘Haridan’ while I carry out my search..... really! What are they mushrooming about?”

Compared to worry, she was gradually getting angrier

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“Hey, hey, hey! You are still worried eh? My dear big sister Margery Daw--”

“Humph! Of----course, who asked the attendants to be so unpromising?”

Margery raised her eyebrows, saying to Khamsin:

“Well, we’re leaving as well.”

“If we don’t hurry, the prey will be hunted by Flame-haired – hehe!”

Ferrying a beauty in an elegant sitting posture, “Grimoire” puffed out deep blue flames and flew towards the business district.

Khamsin and Behemoth, who were standing around, were not planning to do anything temporarily.

“Ah ah, then what do we do now?”

“Uh huh, we’ll let the duo find out about the motives of “Seeking Researcher” ..... First, we have to find all the blood seals of Kadesh from memory, and test to see if



it will cause an interruption, or use this action to lure that guy out, even if it is a little bit, it's good..... What do you think?"

"Ah ah, no problems, let's do it."

After a brief agreement, Khamsin jumped down from the main tower without hesitation.

In the end, the two did not remember the girl who got involved in this because of them.

Matake Ogata's house is located at the perimeter of the old residential area, from a turn in from the main road, and through several alleys.

Eita Tanaka was ill-behaved in middle school, and his reputation was rather poor, so her parents despised him. Far from the din of celebration, the streets at night were exceptionally quiet. He sent Ogata to the corner in front of her house, and let her walk her way home.

"Bye bye, you must never leave home no matter what."  
"

However.....

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“Wait a minute.”

Ogata clung on to his sleeve, not willing to let him go.

Looking at the girl who was still wearing the mask, Tanaka simply could not understand.

“Why don’t you listen? I said I was in a hurry—”

“Let me ask you, who was she?”

She raised the same question that she asked at the riverbank.

Tanaka was completely clueless to why she was so concerned about ‘Margery’.

“..... It does not matter to Ogata-chan.”

Because it was inconvenient to talk about it so casually, Tanaka was intending to be apathetic about it, but Ogata was not going to let it off so easily. She tugged the sleeve even more, and interrogated Tanaka.

“Who is she? I saw you two talking and laughing together!”

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“Didn’t I tell you that it’s none of your business?”

The anxiety over the need to rush to the destination, as well as the annoyance over her uncharacteristic pestering caused Tanaka to roar again. After roaring, he found some strange things in her wordings.

(.....Huh? The two of us were talking and laughing together?)

Thunk...

As he was thinking, he was struck physically.

"... ...?"

He slightly lowered his line of sight.

Ogata rushed into his arms.

He really did not understand the situation. After an instant, Tanaka came to realize the meaning behind her words, and the reasons behind her uncharacteristic pestering.

“Ogata-chan?”

The fragrance of the girl's soft body caused Tanaka's body to feel extremely hot. He was getting blurry, unaware which side was up, like a person spouting nonsense in a fever.

Ogata, who was in his arms, finally took off her mask. The face which was generally recognized as 'handsome' was somewhat sullen.

However, when she saw the comical expression of the boy being at a loss, she could not help but giggle.

"... .."

Seeing the live performance of changing expressions, Tanaka could not help but held his breath.

The last facial expression was rather resolute. She clung close to his chest, took a deep breath, and cried with all her might.

"Eita Tanaka! I like you! I've liked you for a very--- long time! That's why I hate to see you hitting on other girls! Any questions?"

Facing this startling confession, Tanaka felt like he has been hit by a strongly swung bat, his whole body completely froze.

Ogata, who perhaps felt relaxed after making the confession, gradually revealed a calm expression that is yet filled with disbelief.

“Did you... Not...realize it at all?”

Tanaka's movements were completely stiff as he nodded his head, thinking about how to respond.

(... ..  
... .. What to do?)

He had absolutely no idea how to answer her.

He treated the issue of others liking him as purely a joke... .. and therefore, of course he was not psychologically prepared to face the girl who is clinging onto her strong feelings for him. He could only give an expression of shock.

“This feeling” that caused a misunderstanding with her, was that his feelings for Margery Daw were different

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. He was only clear about this, since everything else was in a mess.

Being troubled up till now, his upright and kind-hearted personality allowed him to express his feelings, which were of great worries.

"That ... .. uh, this ... .."

"Ah."

"Ogata-chan, its not that I hate you, it's just....."

"...It's just?"

Hearing the phrase that made her mind about it, Ogata looked up to the huge face of the boy.

"What to say, I am completely clueless regarding this!!"

Tanaka shouted out what seemed to be a counter, his huge hands grabbed the slender shoulders of the girl.

"Ah!?"

Because of astonishment, with a mix of nervousness and fear, Ogata could not help but withdraw back, the

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momentum that was there previously has completely disappeared.

However, Tanaka's actions were not abusive; he just pulled the girl clinging onto him gently. The hot and round brain was mobilized, trying to explain the current situation in the best way possible.

"It's not what you thought, uhm, it's admiration for sure, but not that kind of feeling. Anyway, she's an acquaintance, and because she has tremendous power, so I wanted to be her apprentice, or attendant, and that..... most important thing is that it's not just the two of us, Satou was together with us."

"... .."

Ogata understood that the teenager whom she knew for a long time would not lie to her. Even so, she could not accept it. In these circumstances, she wanted an answer, not an explanation.

"So ... .. what is the answer?"

The meaning was very clear.

"Was ... just now..... unacceptable?"

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On seeing the girl's sincere gaze, Tanaka's answer was lost. He crooned for a while as he grabbed her shoulders, before barely squeezing out a stereotypical answer.

"Uh - this, thank ... .. Thank you."

"?"

Ogata was stunned, before feeling somewhat amused and relieved.

This time, the shoulders, which were originally being grabbed, were batted down as a "thunk" was heard—when she looked up, the guy who she confessed to has already fled.

"What do you mean--! It's not an answer you know!"

"It's too sudden, I can't handle it!"

It looked like a typical squabble, but in truth, both were screaming at each other in fear.

"You must not leave home! Absolutely not!"

Tanaka shouted as he was running, and in the end, and in the end, shouted out an oath from within his heart

“See you tomorrow!”

Keisaku Satou moved fearfully in the opposite direction of where the crowd towards Misaki City station in the night.

The bus terminal in front of the station was half covered with wires and tubes that were protruding, but people did not seem to care about it, treating it indifferently. The queues of passengers waiting for the bus at the terminal seemed to be much longer and thicker than before.

Satou went near, and understood the reason behind it.

Because the entrance to the train station was locked by the steel shutter, the people who were unable to get in had to take a bus.

Of course, because of the switch in locations of the vehicles, there was a traffic jam that would be seemingly

---

impossible to resolve. There was no idea when the next bus would arrive, but the thing that the people are complaining about is not the abnormal changes occurring to the train station, but the traffic congestion.

(Seems like the 'denizens' haven't arrived yet.....  
Margery nee-san does not seem to be around as well.....  
)

For many reasons, Satou was relieved, and arrived at the front of the station.

It has been an unprecedented situation, for the steel shutter used only for emergency to turn into a sturdy barrier blocking his way. The steel shutter was not only densely covered with steel frames and wires, it was emitting a weird green light.

(Is a 'Denizen'..... inside?)

With the idea that he would be heard as long as he make a sound, he held his tongue and started to look around.

There were street buskers performing at night spots, taxi drivers resting, even temporary stall owners targeting tourists who were viewing the festival, only the strange station stood there like a foreign object.

(Let's see, is there any entrance that I can enter?)

After seeing that there were no signs of harm or destruction, and the surroundings are too quiet, he got bolder subconsciously, and started to think of a bold approach.

For unauthorized actions like these, if there were no yield of results, he would not have the face to go back to Margery, and thus he unconsciously tried to justify his actions. His brain did not consider what he could do in reality.

"... .. Ah?"

Just when he looked up and around, his eyes were gazed upon an old man.

This old man was dressed in overalls, and looked like a cleaner. He pushed a cart full of tools up the gentle slope. In front was the entrance solely for employees.

---

This door does not seem to be entangled by that weird thing.

(This!)

“Hey, Old man!”

Satou turned and shouted, completely forgetting the idea of lingering around. He continued to move to the break-through point.

“Is it heavy? Let me help.”

Although some of his words and deeds may seem frivolous, he has great affinity for a teenager, and is also used to taking the initiative in helping others.

The old cleaner probably felt that the cart is really heavy, so he immediately accepted the initiative.

“Oh, really? Thank you.”

“Where. Oh yeah, let me hold the cart, can you open the door?”

“Eh? Okay.”

---

The old man let Satou handle the heavy cart, walked up the gentle slope and opened the door. He opened the rusted and heavy door inwards, and shouted to the kind teenager.

“Many thanks. I have to make a lot of effort to open the door every time.”

“Is that so? Well, then I’ll push the cart inside.”

It seemed that he wanted to clear his damning conscience with labor, as Satou was finally able to push the extremely heavy cart to the top of the gentle slope, which is the station house. The old man, who entered first, pressed the switch on the wall, and turned on the lights.

“What, what is this!?”

The old man shouted as he saw what was in front of him.

"Uh ... ...?"

Satou raised his head when he heard the outcry, and was immediately speechless.

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The erosion inside seemed to be worse than it was outside. In this air-conditioning and facility management room—a very large space, there were pulsating movement and green lights emitted from tubes and wires everywhere, together with foreign objects pulsating in irregular beats. Like they have accidentally entered the belly of a machine made monster.

“Ah—what’s going on?”

"Oh wow!"

“Aiyo?”

In an instant, a high-decibel surprised sound came from the loudspeaker, the old uncle and Satou immediately covered their ears.

“Ah! A—nother intruder? It’s already the fifth time, oh boy.”

A nonchalant voice echoed in this strange space, causing fear in Satou.

The first time he heard this voice.

(It’s the ‘Denizen’--!)

---

The most laughable thing is, at this point Satou was immersed in the sense of superiority. He found this cannibal from another dimension earlier than Tanaka (In actual fact, Domino was a servant to the ‘Denizens’, a ‘Rinne, but of course the teenage did not know this.). Simply getting the first step was enough to let him feel unspeakable joy.

(This is the enemy of Margery nee-san--)

Needless to say, because his body was trembling from fear, he was simply unable to take any action.

“Hey--! Hurry up and get out--! I’m extremely busy now ny—yah!”

The originally nonchalant voice suddenly became jumpy.”

“They finally—arrived--! Flame Hazes!!”

A voice rang, however there is no idea who the thing is talking to. A thing resembling a serpent head made of mechanical parts flew to where they were.

“Hey--! Hurry up and get out! If—not I’m gonna eat you--! Roar--!”

---

“Waaa-!”

The old man let out a cry and ran away.

Satou stopped for a while for with no good reason, but the drive of fear over the possibility of him dead caused him to turn and run.

"Wa ah ah ah ah ah!!"

Facing such an inhuman monster, he could not do anything.

“Roar—oh! Bring it on! Flame Hazes!”

The boy stumbled as he ran outside, the door behind him closed brutally.

Seemed like it wanted to keep everything else out.

Shana extends her bright red wings and flew off, forming an arc between the towers.

She did not care about the viewers on the roads and behind the windowpanes. Once the peaceful waves

---

appear, everyone will treat these occurrences as something natural, and will not think too much about it.

“Where do we go to now?”

Alastor asked from the pendant “Cocytus” on her chest.

As she answered, Shana’s bright red eyes were fixated on what was in front.

“First we cross the main road, and then we check out the side alleys.”

“Um, sounds good.”

“Um”

The conversation between them was short and concise, no extra words were needed.

Just like the time before they came to this city.

The two subconsciously thought at the same time, and realized that after they came to this city, the number of conversations between Shana and Alastor has increased.

Although they do not know if it was a good thing or a bad thing, they subconsciously thought again.

It feels a bit lonely.

“Alastor! It’s the station!”

“Um”

The duo, who were flying in the air, found the base of the enemy rather quickly.

This mysterious structure was eye-catching, located right in the middle of the city.

“As expected, we can’t sense the ‘Crimson Lord’.”

“Is he hidden in that strange structure?”

The two voiced their question at the same time. Of course, there was no reply.

The two then thought.

Yuji is probably able to see through this.

A moment after they thought about that, Shana immediately shut her mouth, while Alastor did not speak any more.

The flame haze of two beings in one body, "Enpatsu Shakugan no Uchite" was ready to vent her frustration on the enemy in front of her.

"I want to burn it to a crisp."

The tone of the partner hints at the anger, like fire in the ash, the "Flame Lord" who gave her this power gave a sense of agreement as an answer.

On the hair, the eyes and the wings, the glow of bright red intensified, like firedust flying wildly in the air.

Under the black 'blanket', the bright red yukata was fluttering in the advancing winds.

Unknowingly, her hand was holding an unsheathed samurai sword. The design was simple, no cumbersome decorations, beautifully arc-shaped, a slender yet sturdy blade. It was her favorite sword, filled with killing intent, the 'Nietono no Shana'.

---

---

Like it came from a fantasy world, that flying body mesmerized everyone who saw it.

Shana did not care about the vehicles covering the road, the crowd heading towards the festival, or the people viewing from the towers on the side, and moved forward. She started to gather energy, and prepared to use fire to burn the modified Misaki City station completely.

Because it was not a battle within the Fūzetsu, it would be impossible to recover everything afterwards. Besides, it had been modified, so the people inside were not likely to be eaten. (In fact, Domino had chased them away.) There was no need to worry about the damage, she just needs to make sure it does not affect the surroundings, and thus shrank the range of the attack.

"-----"

Inhaling and exhaling, the 'power of existence' began to gather on her hands, in the form of fire, which began to assemble and grow. Using willpower, she converted this sign of strength into reality, and once she felt there



was enough energy to destroy the nucleus of Misaki City Station, Shana performed an emergency stop in mid-air

...

“---Ha!”

With a loud cry, the "Nietono no Shana" was pointed in front.

In an instant, the bright red flames expanded, covering the samurai sword, and quickly transformed into a tornado, which was finally released with overwhelming heat and size in the form of a wave.

Right at the last moment...

“What!?”

The flames suddenly turned.

Several meters before reaching the station, the bright red wave went up vertically into the sky. Like there was an invisible barrier in front, or even a guided path. It was a magnificent display yet a scene full of humiliation.

“---Ugh!”

The surprised Shana immediately stopped the release of the flames. She was angry and anxious as she spoke, tilting her head.

“Then, let’s attack it head on!”

“Wait, Sha--!”

While Shana charged forward, unfolding her bright red wings as they were speaking.

Suddenly...

“Ah!?”

The onlookers looking upwards saw it growing larger, and closing in.

It was not that the people were in her way, but her flight trajectory was going downwards like the flames, a nosedive—as she realized this, she quickly manipulated her wings, but her speed tossed her to the crowd mercilessly. A piercing sound spread all around, and caused several people to fall, crashing heavily onto the road at the same time.

“It’s falling!?” “Ugh Wa aaaa.....” “What was that just now?” “Aiya--!” “Waaa!”

Tiles were broken, dust blowing about, noise turning into shrieks. It is a miracle that there was no injuries to the crowd.

“Ugh... Oh boy.”

“What’s with you? You were careless.”

Hearing Alastor mention this, Shana realized that she was too impulsive. She tried hard to calm herself down, and capture the invisible object other than herself.

Seems like the enemy is skilled in using Jizaihō other than for assault. She should have figured this out from the Jizaihō that was used to switch positions just now.

Shana did some self- reflecting, as she quickly pulled the ‘Nietono no Shana’ out, which was pierced deeply as she used it to cushion the impact, and flew up before the dust settles.

And again...

“Ah!”

From the onlookers’ point of view, the trajectory was changed towards the wall of the tower.

Picha!

Shana crashed strongly on the hardened glass, with a loud breaking sound. Because she quickly did a braking motion, she did not crash into the interior of the building. There was a white crack which looked like a spider web. She slowed down this time, wary of the Jizaihō as she rose.

As they made it from the bottom to the top of the building with much effort, Margery, who was was sitting on the ‘Grimoire’ passed by them. The highly technical Unrestraint specialist and the cunning berserker had a small talk.

“You saw that?”

“Um, looks like we can’t attack it head on.”

“If so, how about--- this?”

Margery stopped in mid-air, before stretching a hand out and then flicking a finger.

Many deep blue fireballs appeared everywhere, and stayed in mid-air before floating to the station. After they surrounded the station, the fireballs attacked instantaneously.

“Hm?”

“Aiyo!”

However, as expected, all the fireballs strayed from their intended course, and went in completely different directions, towards the completely uninvolved towers, or the passengers waiting to get on the bus at the bus stop.

As she mocked Shana, who was behind her, holding her breath, Margery flicked her finger again.

In an instant, the fireballs exploded into firedust, which floated away.

The people saw the firedust, which were not from the fireworks, and pointed at them.

---

“Of--- course, there doesn’t seem to be any weaknesses . Because of the interference of that Jizaihō which not only affects ‘those that exists’, but also ‘those that were forced to exist’, which caused the distortion.

“Haha! The Jizaihō used to switch positions just now was a rehearsal; the true aim was this Jizaihō that defends against external attacks, right? Although we were mentally prepared, it is unexpected for the opponent’s methods to be so meticulous.”

Shana, who was flying at a slow speed, could hardly catch up with the "Chōshi no Yomite" and "Jūrin no Sōga", who were analyzing the situation.

“Never thought that finding it would be easy, but attacking it would be hard.”

“That damned ‘Seeking Researcher’ has not changed a bit, using a unique method to harvest such a large amount of energy. Any normal approach would not work.”

Alastor reevaluated the professor’s capabilities.

Margery revealed a look of a bored babysitter, and coldly remarked.

---

“You’re really too anxious today, not even focused at all, what a big help.”

Shana was speechless; Margery did not even look at her, and placed her hand on the “Grimoire” she was riding on. In a way invisible to the naked eye, she went on to search and guess the ‘Jizaishiki’ used.

“Now... how about ‘this’ first?”

“Okay, okay—then the bullet?”

“That”

As she pointed to the top of a tower, a ‘clank’ sound was heard as the lightning rod was broken. Deep blue flames spouted out from the broken end of the rod, and flew towards them like rockets. At this point, she began to recite the ‘Tosatsu no sokkyou shi’, a song which she habitually uses before activating a large Jizaihō.





“Onwards through the streets of Branbury!”

“Ride on the horse and explore!”

Her partner Marchosias responded as the two performed a duet. Afterwards, a Jizaihō appeared, surrounding the broken lightning rod and spinning around it. Margery then went on:

“The lady on the white horse!”

“Wears a ring on her finger, a bell on her feet!”

Marchosias continued to sing, as the rotational speed and density of the Jizaishiki continued to increase, covering the lightning rod in layers. Margery pointed at the station, and finished it off by saying:

“No matter where we go, there’s always company, ho!”

Immediately, the lightning rod covered by the Jizaishiki flew towards the station like an arrow.

“Ah!”

---

---

Like an unraveling ball of thread, the multi-layered Jizaishiki peeled off, bit by bit.

Margery and Marchosias stared in front, saw the originally corroding lightning rod regain its shine, and deflected in a completely different direction.

When Margery saw that, she could only shrug her shoulders and say:

“Ai-yaya, all my efforts inputting this many defensive measures to prevent interference..., didn’t expect it to be removed completely.”

“This... situation has become even more complicated eh, my highly skilled unrestraint specialist Margery Daw --?”

Marchosias replied, half-teasingly.

Shana was not as skilled as them in using Jizaishiki (or should we say, not even close), and could only stare at the station impatiently.

“In other words, a simple direct attack would not work ?”

Alastor replied in a serious tone.

“Well...Uh... the extremely famous ‘Seeking Researcher’s’ Jizaishiki does have a lot of peculiarities, but it would be difficult to break it with a direct attack. We might have to discuss it with the "Gisō no Karite"

As if he suddenly thought of something, Marchosias spoke.

“Hm? Now that you mention it, where are they?”

“They are around here anyway--”

“Nee-san!”

“Wa!”

“Oo!”

Without warning, Tanaka’s voice echoed into Margery’s and Marchosias’ consciousness. It was a Jizaishiki that can transmit voice.

Seems like Tanaka has reached the ‘Haridan’ located in the secret base.”

---

Hearing that her attendant has reached the secret base safely, Margery was secretly relieved, but her mouth was screaming abuse.

“You’re too slow! What were you dilly-dallying for?”

Incidentally, this Jizaishiki does not actually transmit sound. Only Tanaka can hear Margery’s and Marchosias’ voice, and only they can hear his. To the onlookers, it’s like they are on a phone call.

“I’m sorry, because there were some things that popped out at the last minute.....”

“No need for the long explanation. Most importantly, what’s the situation? Can you see the Jizaishiki?”

Understanding that Margery was using Jizaishiki to communicate, Shana waited silently for a resolution. Ever since the battle with the ‘Aizen siblings’, she has heard from Yuji that the "Chōshi no Yomite" has a few helpers in Misaki City.

However, neither Yuji nor Shana knew that the helpers were Satou and Tanaka; although Margery and Marchosias knew all four of them, but did not know that they were friends.

Tanaka did not know that the girl named “Yukari Hirai”, disguised as his classmate and living in this city, is now the "Enpatsu Shakugan no Uchite" beside Margery, and so he spoke:

“Ya, I can see it, but...”

“What? Clarify yourself!”

Hesitating while taking into account the safety of his friend, Tanaka finally replied:

“Because of that weird Jizaishiki that switches positions..... I got separated from Satou, and he hasn’t arrived yet.”

“What!?”

“Ah! There isn’t any immediate danger yet, so what on earth is that boy do--ing?”

“N... What do we do now?”

Tanaka's voice was filled with unrest. To him, he was afraid that he would be abandoned by Margery, who he really admired. Being kind-hearted however, he did not want the same fate to befall on Satou.

Margery understood this. She roughly pulled away the hairclip that matches her yukata and held her hair in a bun, and decided to temporarily not pursue this situation

.

"Can't be helped, really... I'll look for him on the way, you should do what you have to do!"

"Yes, yes."

Margery did not like letting her comrade beside her see her indifferent attitude in dealing with her attendants. Rather than the sake of her two attendants then herself, she requested Tanaka to respond.

"Then, what's the situation with the Jizaishiki? Describe it using your own expression."

While talking, she pointed her thumb at Shana. A deep blue flame was emitted from the thumb and flew towards Shana's forehead. Then .....

---



“At the center of the road—”

Shana could also hear the voice of the person ‘who should be regarded as an attendant’. Margery used the opportunity to repeat the instructions given to her.

“Should I say, down the road, not like the ‘pinions’ of the ‘Aizen siblings’, that were scattered everywhere..... it seems to only spread down the road.”

“.....?”

Shana frowned, not at the instructions given, but the voice of the other party made her suspicious.

(This voice, when and where have I heard it before--?)

Margery naturally did not sense her suspicion, and continued asking.

“How does it look like?”

“Not that messy, jumbled up feeling..... but a picture of similar patterns flowing through the road.”

“Hm... not like the ‘Aizen’ way of using the torch as a support mechanism, but by using one with an expansionary type Jizaishiki as the source.”

“Ah? Even so, that silly inventing king has to set up such a ridiculously large Jizaishiki himself. So how come we can’t sense him?”

“Uh huh... it is strange all right.”

Although Margery’s and Marchosias’ way of combat is strange, they are experts at Jizaishiki. From their view, to set up a Jizaishiki that encompasses the entire city at one go, and yet not revealing the caster’s presence, is seemingly impossible.

“If so, there should be some sort of mechanism.”

“Hehehe! How—about this, let’s just set up a super large Fūzetsu, and destroy everything except for humans eh, my super dynamite Margery Daw?”

“You’re right, we just need to break this Jizaishiki, now we need to specify the conditions, and destroy all our targets in order. This should allow us to determine the objective of the ‘Seeking Researcher’ mechanism.”

---

Hearing these two battle crazy people having such a crude conversation, Shana could not believe her ears, but there is no other effective method—

“Wait!”

Pondering, she shouted, wanting them to stop.

“?”

Tanaka, located in the ‘Haridan’, revealed a troubled expression, because he felt that he has heard the voice of this heroic yet stern girl somewhere.

Margery thought she was voicing an objection.....

“What? Got a prob—”

She realized it as she spoke.

“No way.”

Alastor spoke.

“What-----the hell?”

Marchosias continued.

---

They could finally sense it.

They could sense a large, dangerous and unstable presence of the 'Crimson Lord'--- it should belong to 'Seeking Researcher' Dantalion, or simply called 'Professor'.

However, there was not a hint of any intention to hide, but the intentional revealing of this presence cannot be sensed from Misaki City station, which was right in front of them.

This presence is located far away.

Which is to say, he was never in Misaki City in the first place.

"Ah--! What is that?"

No idea who screamed at Shiramine train station, located quite far away from Misaki City station.

This is the third time an incident happened on the platform.

---

The first time was due to unknown reasons that caused all the train rides departing for Misaki City stations to be suspended. The second incident was caused by passengers going to the annual Misago festival having an argument with the personnel due to the suspension of the train service.

The third time happened in the middle of the station, above the rail.

“Ah?”

“What?”

“Mr—mr attendant!”

Everyone, the passengers and the attendants, were wide-eyed as they were stunned to see this inexplicable and outrageous scene.

“Are—are they filming a movie!?”

“No way—”

“Is that the... the train?”

---

It cannot be helped that they were so panicky.

Because right in the middle of the platform, an odd-shaped vehicle appeared, facing the direction leading to Misaki City,

Shiramine station is not like Misaki City's large metropolitan-sized station. It is built on the ground, a typical station in a rural area.

A strange vehicle rose from the ground, like a strange platform – or more accurately, as if it was flying off from a secret base in a special effects movie—rising from the ground which was cracking up.

The front of the vehicle looked like a ram used to ram a city's gate open, tough and sharp. The body is composed of intricate and complicated machinery, like an engine without a cover. On the platform, it looked like an incomplete rocket or missile.

The body of the vehicle spouted out steam, for whatever purposes it serves, and a strong pale green glow is emitted from it. As if he was suddenly ignoring the crowd, who were chattering furiously as they stared at this vehicle.

---

“Ex-cellent! Shall we start from be-low ground as our first step--?”

A sharp, piercing sound can be heard from the vehicle.

“Now, the experiment is fin—ally at its climax!! Self-crystallization of outstanding No. 29182—‘Torch of the night party’... la-unch—ing!!”

“Pacha!” After a sound without any sense of tension was heard, several whistles attached to the top of the vehicle began to roar. A sudden gush of steam came from the bottom of the vehicle, together with a “Choo” sound. The sound of metal rubbing together played a lumbering beat, which then sounded like flowing music as the train sped up.

“We are leaving n—ow! Onwards to the long-awaited place of exper—iment!”

“Pchooo!” The whistle roared at the same time.

That strangely shaped vehicle was heading to the other end of the track—which was the night scene, leaving behind whistles and steam.



Seeing this situation which would have made anyone confused, everyone on the platform could only watch with amazement as the train leaves.

‘Seeking Researcher’ Dantalion was originally located far away, and there was only a faint sense of his large and dangerous presence. Now, with no intent to hide it, he was approaching Misaki City at an alarming pace.

Although the distance would mean that it will take some time for him to arrive, the fact that he was approaching caused that the Flame Hazes to feel an unspeakable ominous premonition.

“No wonder, we didn’t expect him to not be here himself, no wonder we could not sense him.”

“A—s it seems, the one hiding in the station is his ‘Rinne’—assistant Domino. He taught it strange methods to set up a large Jizaishiki, then dispatched him to be a frontal force?”

Margery and Marchosias had a rather casual conversation.

---

Shana's bright red eyes were also looking in the direction where the fast-approach presence was coming from.

"Using a Jizaishiki with that station as the base, was to protect the 'Seeking Researcher' coming from afar, and not the station itself."

"The scope of the situation is really big, and the station itself seems to be the backbone of some intention—now that we mention it, why would that guy use this place as a target? The motives aren't clear. And since it had something to do with tuning, it does not seem to be a good thing at all."

Shana then said:

"That force which deflects Jizaihō and aerial trajectory, did it appear when we were preparing to leave this city, and head towards where the professor is? If this is true, then we're stuck here."

Margery continued:

"As long as the Jizaihō that encompasses this entire city isn't removed, we have absolutely nothing on that '

---

Seeking Researcher', since we don't even know why the hell he is coming to this train station."

Marchosias added:

"However, there isn't any way we can use that method we discussed just now, to destroy everything we can find in the Fūzetsu. We might as well set up a large Fūzetsu, and destroy everything inside."

Finally, Khamsin answered:

"Uh uh, that is not possible.

"Uh huh, it seems now that the Jizaishiki encompassing the either city also has a new function of preventing the activation of a Fūzetsu written in as well ... we have tried and failed a few times already."

The Flame Haze with responsibilities of a tuner was sitting on a pavement tile, floating beside them.

The width of the slab was wide enough to let him sit on it, showing a Jizaishiki that could cause it to float. There were traces of soil underneath it.

Khamsin sighed from under his hood.

---

“Uh huh, it seems that the enemy not only turned the entire station into Jizaishiki, he was careful not to leave out any detail.

Even when we have three Flame Hazes around, we are still in a disadvantage.”

“Hooo, the fate of a Flame Haze is basically one that is easily controlled by destiny, this is an unavoidable fact.”

Hearing the oldest Flame Haze explain himself, which sounded like a self-justification, Shana could not help but express her anxiety:

“So you mean, that we are at the mercy of the enemy?”

“Ah ah, I do not mean that. I just want to remind everyone that we have to understand that the situation is disadvantageous to us, that’s all.”

“Do we even have time to talk about this in this situation?”

Margery saw that the girl was not being herself, and frowned:

“Hey, what’s wrong with you today?”

---

“A—s hysterical as a certain glass of booze!?”

Margery smacked Marchosias, wanting him to quiet down, then proceeded to raise suspicions that she has only noticed recently.

“Oh yeah, that brat’s not with you today?”

“Yeah.”

“Hearing Shana’s cold tone, Marchosias immediately came to realization.

“Haha—ha, you must have quarreled with that ‘Mystes’ boy right? Hehehe!”

“NO WAY!”

The denial confirmed it.

After a moment of silence, Margery revealed an embarrassed expression, and roughly scratched her hair.

“.....Ah--! Even if I don’t want to admit that ‘this is how it went’..... I do feel that we can find that ‘Mystes’ brat for help—“

---

“Eh?”

Shana was shocked by the unexpected proposal.

“Remember the time when that brat was able to identify the disguise of the ‘pinions’, the ones ‘Aizenta’ were most proud of? So my guess is, even though we are at our wits’ end, maybe the brat is able to see through this. With the projection of the ‘Haridan’, where my attendant is, together with the instincts of the brat, it is likely that we would be able to come up with some sort of an idea.”

“Haha! This is a great idea. Wh-----y did you not properly manage that boy? Hehe!”

“Urusai! Urusai! Urusai! Why should I be standing here listening to you...”

Shana reacted to Marchosias’ taunting with an angry statement. Not knowing how to continue on, her voice became even softer and softer.”

Khamsin did not seem to mind the girl’s reaction, but as a Flame Haze, tried to press on.

“Ah ah, what kind of Hōgu does this ‘Mystes’ have?”

---

Alastor answered succinctly.

“The ‘Reiji Maigo’.”

“!..... Aiyaya.”

“Hm, this is a truly incredible Hōgu indeed.”

Seeing the response of the two tuners, Shana quietly made a complicated rebuttal.

(Not only that, Yuji’s even incredible in other aspects--  
)

Margery spoke, as if to represent Shana’s thoughts.

“That brat’s performance is really good. Although he’s useless in combat, he’s pretty smart.”

“This guy is very brave too, deliberately taunting that Sydonay to have a one-on-one battle with him, we should expect a performance from him this time right?”

Hearing the honest approval of those two, the two tuners were surprised, yet agreed:

“Ah ah, to take on Sydonay..... so it seems, he’s no ordinary person.”

“Hm, now that we are at our wits’ end, why don’t we find him, and talk with him?”

Hearing other people’s approval of Yuji, Shana was proud and happy inside.

“.....”

But at the same time, she felt unhappy at being unable to talk about Yuji, instead having other people talk about him.

Margery did not know about her frustration, and continued:

“Anyway, I guess we have to find that brat, and bring him to the ‘Haridan’. Where is he anyway?”

(It’s just one battle together only, and you looked like you understand Yuji well.....)

Under this unjustified anger, Shana hesitated on whether to answer the question or not.

---



At this point, Alastor answered:

“He should be at the riverbank.”

“.....”

Shana was even angry at other people, for being able to talk about Yuji, so certainly and so accurately. This feeling made her hate herself even more.

“Then, what is that brat wearing today?”

Margery approached the grim-looking Shana, stretched her hand forward, and a deep blue flame appear on her palm. The flame quickly emulated Sakai Yuji’s image. That should be him in school uniform before the battle with the ‘Aizen siblings’.

“Ah.....”

Facing this question, Shana did not know how to answer. Her mind could only visualize his angry face and his surprised expression.

While she tried to think harder, her mind was filled with the scene when she quarreled with him.

---

So, Alastor answered again:

“A yellow T-shirt, long pants similar to those of jeans.”

“Ah, really? Like that?”

Margery replied briefly, then adjusted the visual, changing the look to how it was today.

Seeing that image, Shana became extremely depressed. She was already feeling lost since she lost control of her feelings. She could not calm herself as she thought of Yuji . A girl who viewed self-control as a virtue, and as a pillar of support, she did not like this feeling.

(Is this ‘being unable to control my feelings’ .....

The funny thing is, she was asking the heinous ‘Denizen’ who taught her this phrase within her heart. Of course she could not get the answer. She even felt that the ‘Denizen’, who has the appearance of a young girl, will laugh at her with malice.

“Ahah, so young, ‘what a pity’.”

“Hm, now then, we’ll be recording this image.”

---

After Behemoth finished speaking, Khamsin stretched out his left hand, wrapped with the rope-like Hōgu ‘Sabia’. The deep blue flame flowed onto his palm, which changed into a brown flame as it reaches him.

After the transfer, Margery drew a strip from the “Grimoire”, and tossed it to Khamsin.

“This is for communication purposes.”

“Ah ah, many thanks.”

Turning a deaf ear to Khamsin, Margery then spoke to Tanaka, who was listening at the ‘Haridan’.

“Hear that! I’m bringing guests later, notify me when Keisaku reaches there, cutting off now!”

“Yes, yes madam.”

Tanaka was puzzled, feeling that the voice of the other Flame Haze was familiar.

(“Keisaku”?)

Shana tilted her head upon hearing this name, wondering where she heard this before.

---

The Mana River splits Misaki City into two areas, the east area is the commercial district, with a small cluster filled with residents who originally lived there. This has become an old residential area in contrast to the residential districts on the west side of Mana River, where it continues to grow as the business district grows.

Due to this development, most of the apartments here are mansions of the wealthy. A while after turning in from the main road, another world could be seen.

A strange object appeared from the backdoor of one of the largest mansions..

It was a sturdy cart, specifically used to repair cars.

A skinny teenager clad in yukata was trying hard to push the cart.

“Bastard, damn it--!!”

He gritted his teeth and endured, sweat flowing down his face. Pushing it for several seconds, Satou barely pushed the cart over the convex part of the door rail.

“Hooo, Ha!?”

---

Unexpectedly, because of the heaviness and the momentum as it passes the rail, the cart quickly rolled onto the road. It quickly stopped though, because the item on top was really heavy.

On the cart, was a broadsword.

Just a broadsword. It did not make sense why the cart was moving so slowly.

“—Ho, ho, damned it.”

Satou was drenched in sweat as he sat on the cart.

Looking at the broadsword on the cart—the ‘Denizen’ Hōgu ‘Blutsauger’, he revealed an expression of both delight and anger.

(Should I use it.....?)

He thought of his happiness a few moments ago, being driven by that temptation..... however, he shrugged his head violently, telling himself not to waste any valuable (or so he thought) strength.

(Shouldn't use it now..... need to wait for the 'critical' moment.)

As he thought, he continued to push the cart. Shouting like he wants to impose himself:

“Wait and see--! Damned ‘Denizen’! Ha, heh!!”

The voice was filled with a slight, undeniable smile.

This strong smile only showed reckless courage and excitement as he prepares for action.

As he put the broadsword, which no ordinary human can wield, on the cart, Satou prepared to continue on to the destination.

Which was the Misaki City Station occupied by the ‘Denizens’

The only thing he has, is a strip held firmly onto the handle of the cart.

“Are you feeling better now? Yoshida-san?”

Chigusa Sakai spoke as she gave a cup filled with juice to Kazumi Yoshida, who was sitting on the chair.

“Yeah, yes... ..thanks Oba-san.”

Yoshida could barely stop shaking, but her stiff hand could not help but receive the cup.

“No problem, the girl who came along with me today said she had ‘something on’ at the last minute, then she was gone..... I wanted to look for her, but it seems that I got lost. In this crowd, I somehow can’t seem to walk around normally.”

“.....Is that so?”

Even if the people have encountered the strange phenomenon of switching people around, once they were struck by that peaceful wave, like Chigusa, they would come up with some sort of explanation to rationalize this phenomenon.

Yoshida was obviously aware of this, she was aware that because she was working for Khamsin in this tuning, she could sense this change. Everyone around her,

including Chigusa, were repeating the same actions since just now: Being shocked by those strange fireworks, before continuing on with their peaceful activities.

However, 'In comparison to this small issue', Yoshida knew of a more alarming truth, which caused her to gasp frequently. Her heart felt extremely heavy, as if there was a piece of metal underneath the skin on her chest. She stumbled around in disbelief for a long while.

"However, being lost is an interesting experience, I get to even help a distressed girl."

Chigusa's smiled as she sat beside her.

Yoshida was nervous regarding this action, as she softly said, like a mosquito:

"Thanks Oba-san."

"You have already repeated this so many times!"

Chigusa interjected her hem and haw, not caring about it.

".....Sorry."

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“I’m sick of this sentence as well!”

“.....Yes.”

Chigusa saw through the haze from the girl’s cute, shrinking expression. As a parent, she proceeded to address this carefully by asking:

“Was Yuji with you?”

This predictable question made Yoshida tremble.

Her reaction made Chigusa feel that something was wrong.

“Did something happen between you and Yuji?”

“No.”

Yoshida immediately closed her mouth, and did not speak any further.

“.....”

Yoshida’s seemingly stubborn attitude made Chigusa even more puzzled, and worried. She then tried to confirm it by asking her:

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“Really?”

“Yes.”

The answer was rather clear, but hearing it sounds like insistence. It was obvious that she did not want to talk more about it.

She became increasingly concerned. Due to parenting issues, Chigusa continued to ask.

“What did Yuji do to you?”

Yoshida did not understand this question at first.....

“Ah—?”

She then realized that she caused a misunderstanding, and was at a loss for a moment:

“No..... it’s not that, Sakai-kun..... it’s not like this—really!”

Chigusa’s sharp instincts told her that the seriousness of this statement was not fake..... rather, as a fellow female, one who understand men, just to make sure.....

“Excuse me.”

Ugh, ah—

Chigusa touched and checked the surprised Yoshida’s collar, waist and dressing for signs of dishevelment. As one who is used to wearing kimonos, she could not find any signs of folds other than those caused by running. Thus, as a mother and as one concerned for the girl, the lady heaved a sigh of relief.

“Phew, great.”

“Oba-san, Sakai-kun isn’t that sort of person.”

Although she realized that she should not speak like this to another person’s mother, Yoshida still protested. Chigusa shook her head and explained.

“Even if he’s not ‘that type of person’, danger is danger. Once a teenage gets impulsive, it would be very hard for him to stop. Because Yuji is still young, do not get careless by seeing that normal ‘moral’ side of him. There are more situations for a girl to protect herself than a boy. Be careful.”

“Ye-, yes.”

---

Although Yoshida felt that Chigusa got the wrong idea, she could only nod her head after listening to this heart to heart speech. She even secretly wished for it:

(If really, something like that happens.....)

She did not wish that it will be the kind of situation that Chigusa was worried about.

If she was in the situation when she could make her own clear decisions --- why must she meet Chigusa and talk with her at this moment—she thought.

(I can't say anything now, what should I say?)

She could not speak of anything that would hurt her, and tried not to, for fear of her realizing that her son is dead. Of course, she would not believe this, and more importantly, Yoshida herself is unable to accept this as well.

“Then, is it something he said to you?”

“.....”

Yoshida still could not answer.

---

From the beginning to the end, including the incident when she knew that Yuji was a torch, ‘what merely happened’ was that she was scared and ran away after seeing it. The point was not about what he did.

Chigusa did not try to force out an answer, but gave the troubled girl some time to reply.

After a while, Yoshida, who was staring at the scene filled with festival activities, noticed a petite girl. Long hair and short.....

Once that girl turned around, she realized that it was someone else, but she was still frightened.

(Why at this moment.....)

Once she finally calmed down and thought through it, her mind was filled with a certain figure.

(Am I think of Yukari-chan.....?)

That girl was her classmate, bold, tough, smart, cute...  
... very cool, she would develop an inferior complex every time she thinks of her.

(Why?)

---

She was originally thinking about Yuji, how did she end up thinking about her?

That girl..... petite but full of dignity. Far beyond what can be seen on the outside, even her extremely young appearance was radiating a strong presence.

(!! I know, that feeling similar to that person!)

She was right.

A young-looking boy, but has an astonishing power inside him.

The boy who lives away from a comfortable lifestyle.

The Flame Haze, Khamsin.

He was similar to Yukari Hirai.

(Yukari-chan.....?)

Every information within her began to link together.

Yukari and Yuji never really had a chance to get together. They were suddenly good friends from some point on— although the two often quarreled, she could

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feel this good, somewhat incredible relationship—not only at school, their residences are in close proximity, and they could even have a jog in the morning—thinking about the moment when she was going to confess to him, she suddenly became very angry—

This girl named Yukari Hirai.

She was her friend. She was her classmate in kindergarten; she even danced beside her during a class talent performance. They were in different in primary and secondary schools, and were classmates in Misaki High, so they often talked--- together? ----- Did that really happen?

It should have happened, but why did this impression feel ‘weird’?

(..... Like the time when she saw the world full of torches.....)

The one who showed her that world, Khamsin’s words continued to echo within her mind.

This city was once attacked by Denizens. Those Denizens were eradicated, and the comrade who destroyed them is still living in this city.

---

Which also means that it was a Flame Haze, like Khamsin,

(.....)

“A Flame Haze like Khamsin.”

(.....What am I thinking.....?)

An intuitive answer was made.

(.....Yukari-chan is.....?)

However, even if she knew, she could not understand.

“A Flame Haze and a torch?”

(Yukari-chan and--)

Khamsin and Behemoth mentioned it, that a torch is ‘the residue of dead people, which will disappear unwittingly, a replacement entity for a human’.

Will someone actually ‘like’ this ‘thing’?

Thinking back to the time when she went head to head with her.

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It was a heart to heart talk.

A battle where both sides do not want to lose.

That moment was definitely not a pretense.

She was certain of this.

(There must be some reason.)

Yoshida realized the answer from despair.

(Even when she realized the ‘truth’, she still like..... “  
This Sakai-kun”)

The one who she confirms to be her enemy, the strong feelings of the opponent gave her strength, allowing her to step on the brakes in time before falling off the edge of despair.

(If Yukari-chan could do it, why can't I?)

Through her opponent's strong emotions, her feelings began to boil up as well.

The only thing is, is that alright?

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Could she ignore everything else and like that guy?  
She needed confidence.

“Äh..... ”

“What?”

She then began to think about whether she should ask Chigusa directly, because Chigusa is still the boy's mother.

However, Yoshida really wanted to ask the girl, in a different sense, who, like the Flame Haze, knows the ‘truth about this world’. She hoped that she would get her answer, and continue to work hard and move forward, although she would probably hurt.

Yes, she still likes him.

So she felt painful.

(---I like Yuji Sakai-kun---)

It was not a weak feeling that would suddenly vanish.

Until now, she still strongly likes him

---

“ .....

A while ago, she made the first step, sank into despair, and ran away.

The she now still does not learn; still carrying that glimmer of hope, and again.....

Thinking about Khamsin's words..... even if she were hit by despair, the boy's words were still clear and distinct.

(-- “Even then, I will still choose what I think is the best option.”--)

Kazumi Yoshida did not fawn, expect or rely.....

But to grab onto determination strong enough to withstand his answer, and making the first step forward.

Choosing the path she felt was ‘best’.

“ .....Even if.....”

“?”

Yoshida took a deep breath, then carefully minced her words, not wanting Yuji's mother to understand the true meaning behind it, and said:

“Even if nothing can be changed, even if I'm powerless, I still fond of it.”

It was simple, not sounding like a query. It was her sincere feelings, like a vow.

Hearing her speak, Chigusa was honestly impressed with the girl who was honest with her feelings, so she made a simple answer from her heart, not wanting to include any unnecessary ideas.

She could understand the meaning of this girl's question.

And understood that the girl was fighting with another girl.

However, facing such a pressing question, she has to give an answer.

Chigusa thought, she should just give this answer to the two of them.

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Just an answer from someone else is not going to change it to strength. Strength has to be made by oneself. The outcome between the two is decided from the time they decided to confess their feelings to him.....she was clear that the key decision was whether they want to take action.

She has already told this to Shana.

So now, she has to say this to Kazumi Yoshida.

Chigusa complied her answer, gazed at Yoshida's eyes , and answer:

“The main point is whether you like him or not, it's just that simple, everything else doesn't matter.”

“.....”

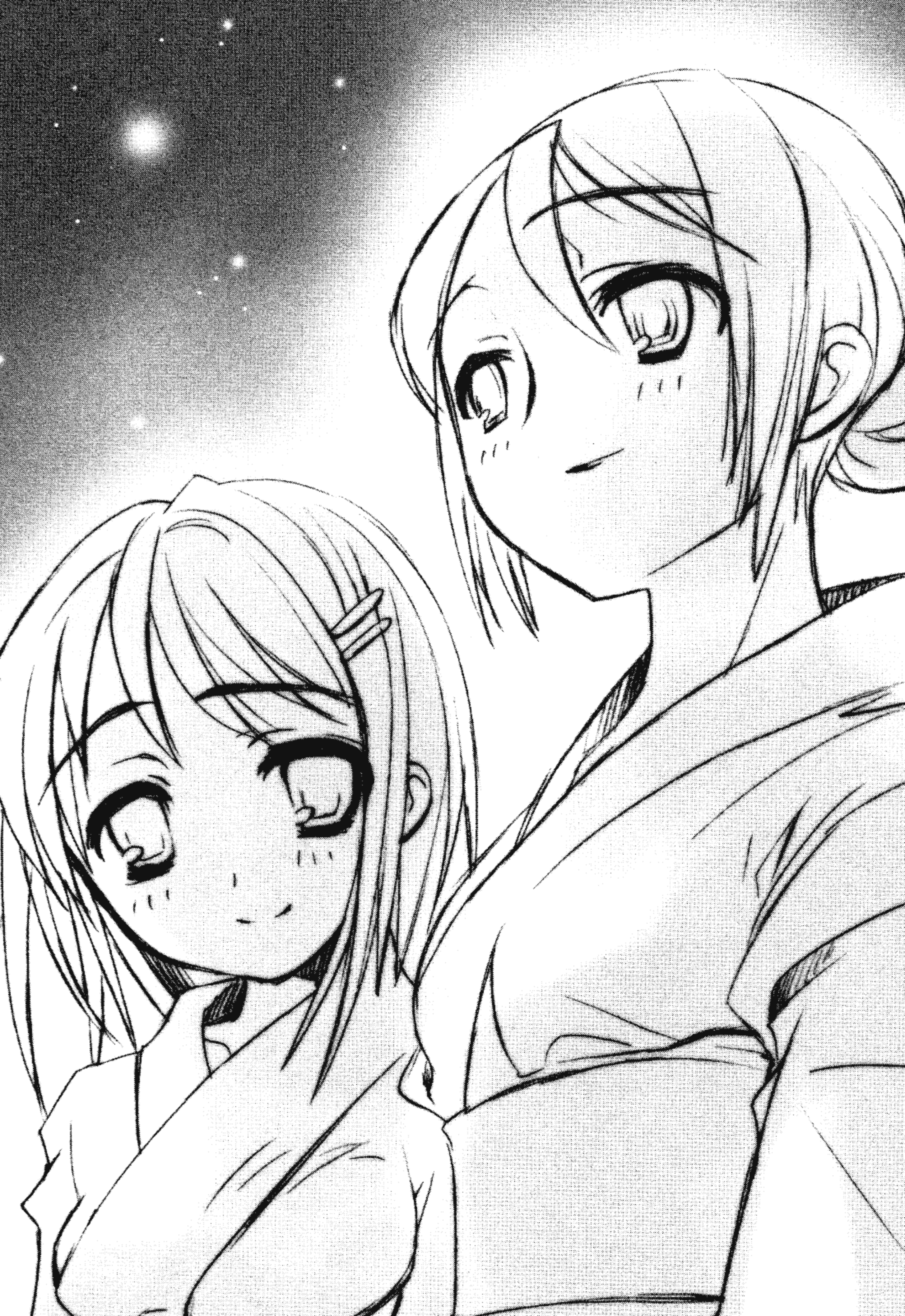
A question that does not seem like a question, got an answer that does not seem like an answer.

Yoshida accepted this answer.

“...Thank you.”

Then again, with deep thanks and thoughts regarding the future:

“Thank you.”







## Chapter 3 - Agitation

“Hey, the old men are leaving.”

“.....”

Even as Margery spoke, Shana still floated there, motionless.

“Missy, what on earth happened--?”

“.....”

To Marchosias’ question, Shana has no answer.

After the conversation with Khamsin a while ago, who was moving towards the riverside first, she was rooted to the spot.

After the connection with Tanaka was cut off, he asked :

“Ah ah, by the way, what is the name of that ‘Mystes’ kid?”

Margery placed her finger on her lips, and looked at Shana.

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Shana blatantly revealed a helpless expression,, and spoke with a heavy tone:

“Sakai Yuji.”

“!”

Once Khamsin heard this name, he immediately raised his chin slightly. For a person who does not reveal his emotions, it is a sign that he was surprised.

“Ah ah, Sakai..... ‘Sakai-kun’?”

“Hmm..... didn’t expect that.”

Shana was otherwise surprised by the silent responses of the two.

A surge of foreboding suddenly swept across her chest

.

“What?”

To this short question, the old Flame Haze just shook his head, and answered with a sigh:

“Ah ah, nothing.....seems like he is the friend of our helper.”

“Hmm, so it seems that the presence felt at the beginning belongs to the ‘Enpatsu Shakugan no Uchite’ .....

“Ah ah, I hope we ‘don’t have to use it’ .....

Regarding what Khamsin and Behemoth were talking about, which does not sound very good, Shana could not help but inquire further.

“Friend? How would you describe it?”

Alastor, who knew them well, could tell something was up from the uneasiness of his partner.

“Helper..... As in... getting a native from this city to help you to capture an imaginative frame for tuning?”

(A native from this city.....?)

Shana quickly thought of it in retrospect.

“---!!”

---

She thought of her conversation with Yuji.

(--“Yoshida-san ‘knows everything now!’”--)

Shana words escaped her mouth as she repeated what Yuji said to her in the midst of the celebrations under the distortions, when he “refused to go out with her”.

“.....Yoshida Kazumi.”

The correct answer left Khamsin with an expression of realization.

“Ah ah, so they are friends.”

The tuner’s short yet affirmed confirmation resulted in Shana feeling a slight chill within her heart.

Yoshida Kazumi has barged into ‘Yuji and her world’.

While Yuji shouted at her, Shana was hoping that Yuji would come along with her.

Besides going out with her, would going out with Yoshida Kazumi be much better?

Because it is a Flame Haze with a 'Mystes', so we should together.

No, it is not like this. "It doesn't matter whether I'm a Flame Haze", just wish for both of us to be together—

(!!—Wha, what am I thinking?)

The fleeting thought startled her.

And fear.

Regarding Yoshida Kazumi, regarding Yuji, and regarding herself.

She was not herself anymore, that 'uncontrollable feeling' has crept into her heart..... what was originally a warm and soothing feeling, has now been replaced by fear, which causes her to be extremely terrified.

The duo did not care about Shana's response.....

"Ah ah, then we should go and look for that Sakai Yuji."  
."

“Uh hmm, even if it is a reason other than necessity, it better if we were to look for him.”

After speaking, together with the pavement slab they were sitting on, they flew towards the sky.

Leaving behind Margery and Marchosias, who did not understand the conversation and were just standing aside, Shana, who was rooted to the spot, and Alastor, who remained silent.

And now.....

Margery, who has lost her patience with the unresponsive Shana (or should we say, she's so impatient her patience would only lasts for a few seconds.), quickly got straight to the point:

“Was the reason why you quarreled with that brat because of that ‘Yoshida Kazumi’?”

Shana reacted, her shoulders were trembling slightly.

“Aiyaya, did I guess correctly?”

“Ugh.....”

---

Marchosias casually teased this young girl, who remains speechless.

“I say missy, don’t mind it, it’s a common thing. Love or be loved, breaking up and breakdown, he---he, he!”

“..... It’s not that.”

“Eh?”

The duo asked in unison.

Shana did not reply, but muttered to herself.

“Because I’m a Flame Haze, so I will not do this.”

A ‘Hong’ sound was heard as the bright red wings on her back burst into flames, cutting through a line in the night sky, and flying away.

Not heading to the youth at the riverbank, but towards the ‘Seeking Researcher’ Dantalion, whose reasons for approaching the station are unknown.

The two silently watched the girl leave. As she was intentionally trying to found out if the Jizaihō would prevent her from leaving the city, they had no reason to stop her.

Finally, Marchosias spoke up:

“Ah—if we’ve known, we should have clarified that ‘Flame Hazes are the same’, right? My lady who courted with love, Margery Daw?”

“How should I say? Some things are best left to discover by oneself, however.....”

Margery spoke as she sat on the ‘Grimoire’, her elbows are placed on her thighs, which were raised, her hands cupped together.

“Flame Haze are real loners—even if several are gathered, everyone will scatter and do their things, a complete lack of teamwork.”

“.....And you have the cheek to say that.”



Sakai Yuji was still among the crowd, moving about, looking for Yoshida Kazumi.

In this disorderly celebration, people were either unaware of the situation, or were quickly calmed down after realizing the situation and panicking. There were an uncountable number of people packed in here, but they were affected by the Jizaihō what was switching the location of the people arbitrarily, so it was basically impossible to look for any particular person.

Despite all these, Yuji continued to look for her.

It did not occur to him what he would say to her when he finds her. He did not understand why she has the Hōgu , and knew all the secrets of the ‘Denizens’? When she saw him, what appeared in her eyes was undoubtedly a look of fear. However, he continued to look for her.

He did not know what else he could do.

She knew the truth, and together with the events that occurred after that, impulse forced him to take an action that is seemingly lost in ignorance.

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As he quickly patrolled around and looked around, he could not find the girl he was looking for. Under the brightness of the light bulbs, the touting of the hawkers, the aroma of the fried cuttlefish and the red apple candies which were shining like gemstones.

Up till a while ago..... before going out with the girl, it was a scene filled with happiness, like a fantasy.

He was unwilling to face the truth hidden behind this scene, the other ‘truth of the world’, which is still occurring. And in this world which he knows of, there is another girl—not the one he is looking for now—he could sense it.

(.....Shana.)

Maybe it was because of the effects of the Hōgu ‘Reiji Maigo’ within his ‘Mystes’ body, which grants him exceptional recognition of the ‘Power of Existence’, sometimes even surpassing other Flame Hazes. And because of that, he was able to quickly track Shana’s location.

She flew away immediately after separating from him, and fought in the Commercial District. The attack seems

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to have failed, as the enemy seemed to have set up a strange power which could avoid and deflect attacks.

But the most important thing is that a large presence, which seems to belong to a 'Crimson Lord', is fast approaching from afar.

She was flying to that target.

He fully understood everything.

Even so, he still continued to look for Yoshida Kazumi.

It was the only thing he could do.

(---'You liar!!'---)

Hearing this shrill cry made him numb to everything else.

Was he wrong to shout at her? What exactly did he react to from that conversation? Which particular sentence made her react? The chemistry which was once established was damaged because of a certain sentence.

Once she left him, she immediately left for the battlefield.

---

He knew it, and could sense it; all he could do was look up.

The glow of the bright red wings flew away, and it seemed further away than it really was.

Now, he is looking for Yoshida Kazumi.

Once he found her, it would only cause him frustrations. It was impossible to amend things no matter how he tried to explain everything to her. In any case, what were his intentions for looking for her? What should he have done? What did he really want to do?

To be honest, he had no idea.

He inadvertently looked at the celebration activities.

It seems like the fireworks have finally stopped, what remains in the sky were the stars and moon, which were covered by the lights. The situation in Misaki City could not be determined by appearance. The peaceful wave which calms people down was continuously enveloping the entire region frequently. If not for his exceptional sensing capabilities, he would not have known all of these. However.....

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(Even if I do know about it, what can I do?)

Yuji thought as he looked around, trying to find the girl. It was because of this sense, that he could grasp the movement of the Flame Hazes.

(What's going on.....One of them is heading here.)

The one approaching was not Shana, but another Flame Haze with a strong and steady presence.

(Oh yeah, I remember there was another Flame Haze.)

Thinking about what happened yesterday, he realized something:

(Another one..... don't tell me.....)

Yoshida Kazumi knew of the 'truth of this world'.

It seems that the Hōgu which looked like a monocle was used to observe him.

Who gave her this, and told her all these?

(It's this guy!)

There was no concrete evidence or reason. If there is a need for reason, it is because in terms of pairing, it would be impossible to think of any interaction between Yoshida Kazumi and Margery Daw. However, Yuji's mind was filled with this almost certain speculation, and rage filled within him.

(It was this guy that brought Yoshida-san to 'this world'!!)

Revealing that expression to Yoshida Kazumi.

Knowing his real appearance.

Derailing her everyday life.

Stepping on her precious everyday life

His rage was directed at this person who caused this series of events to happen.

The presence of the Flame Haze who initiated all these continued to get close, as if it was heading to the riverbank.

Yuji sprinted.

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He intended to run to somewhere convenient to talk, away from the crowd. He got away from a group of ladies in front of him, clad in yukata. He did not care about their grumbling. He jumped above the water tank used for ball-fishing, did not care about the shouting of the salesperson, and kept running.

He quickly arrived at a deserted area where the lights suddenly stopped working. This is where leftovers and trash were dumped at.

If it is this place—as he thought, he realized something

.

(If that guy is heading in this direction, how am I going to let him know that I'm here!?)

Regarding this fast-approaching Flame Haze, Yuji felt an unprecedented amount of anger and anxiety. He would definitely not allow this person who 'destroyed the "illusion of him as a human"', told Yoshida Kazumi regarding "the truth of this world"' to ignore him and pass by him.

Should he vent his anger on the other party? Is this the right time to do this? He did not bother to care about these. He angrily prepared to declare that 'I'm here'. At this moment.....

Bam bam!

"!?"

His chest.....no, a pulse was produced from his body.

Yuji again self-consciously controlled this feeling all over his body.

Bam bam!

"What is this?"

He felt that there was a foreign object within his body, and felt the thing resonating with him, beginning to operate. Like electricity that flowed in a just-connected power cable, and like water gushing out from a dam, he naturally generated the control of its power and pulsation.

".....I see."

---



Several months ago, a “Crimson Lord’s” arm was hacked as he tried to get the Hōgu ‘Reiji Maigo’ which resides in his ‘Mystes’ body.

That arm remained within his existence, and became a foreign object within his body, causing him discomfort. And now, it is now resonating with that powerful force, and becoming one.

“Is this the ‘Power of Existence’?”

Yuji kept exploring into the theory and feeling of the phenomenon caused by the Flame Haze and ‘Denizens’.

As they use up a large amount of ‘Power of Existence’, they became stronger..... Yuji tried to understand and feel what makes them valiant.

Shana has a light and soft appearance of an ordinary girl. However, at the critical moment, she will unleash a powerful force. This is not a physical change; the thought of ‘becoming even stronger’ made her stronger.

Using it on oneself will make one stronger. Once used on other things, it is a Jizaihō. Humans were born with

this power which ‘causes people to exist’, full of infinite possibilities--- this is how the ‘Power of Existence’ is used and consumed.

Yuji could understand that feeling as well as the state of it, mastering his anger at the same time. Once he understood the trick, controlling the ‘Power of existence’ was a piece of cake.

He heart ‘revealed’ his anger.

Thinking that he was a tiger-like cannibal, using his ‘Power of Existence’, he arranged every thought of his anger that he could think about in order.

"----- Woah Oooo Oooo Oooo -----!!"

Not caring about the situation around him, Yuji sent a strong, angry roar from within his heart.

The night air was vibrating loudly, like a tiger’s roar.

Shana, who was flying to the outskirts of the city, felt that sudden outburst of force.

(.....Is that Yuji?)

Shana was able to sense this emotionally-charged vigor better than anyone else, and trembled.

(Yuji is angry.)

It was scary.

It was completely different from the overwhelming power filled with menace on the battlefield. In fact, the power he displayed now wasn't scary. It was too unrefined, and in terms of actual ability, it cannot match an ordinary Denizen.

It's just that he looks frightening when he's angry.

Even at this moment when she's flying, her body wants to curl up.

However, she kept flying.

(I'm a Flame Haze)

It was like a form of dependency.....thinking about it, shaking her head, not caring about the circumstances. Only focusing on the job at hand, and letting everything else exist as her mission.

Before this, it was only natural and right, and the only objective.

A development as natural as breathing.

However, maintaining status quo has become difficult. Her reasoning tells her that any perturbation is unnecessary, but she could not get rid of it. She barely held onto her simple feelings as a Flame Haze, and it was the first time that she has to make such an effort to do it.

The girl, a Flame Haze, flew away from the train station and along the broad viaduct with tracks paved on it. There was no depression as she reached a fork in her way, and flew correctly to this large and looming presence.

The intentions of that madman, 'Seeking Researcher' Dantalion, simple called—Professor, were unknown. What they knew was that once he appears, there would be mass chaos. Maybe he would severely damage the

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environment, or add on to the mess, or even start to consume a large number of humans.

No matter what the objective is, they cannot allow him to do what he wants.

This is not a call from the heart of a Flame Haze, but a call from a young girl living in Misaki City. The objective two actions would substantially overlap each other, so there was no contradiction.

Anyway, her only thought was to stop that professor.

On the viaduct, there were only electric cables, endless number of rail tracks, and a thick concrete wall. This continued onto the other side of the night scenery, towards to endless horizon.

The Professor is coming out from the darkness.

The girl got ready to battle, trying hard to calm her anxiety.

Regarding this girl, Alastor has nothing more to say.

On the platform of Misaki City station, the Hōgu “

---

Self-crystallization of outstanding No. 7932—Humming of the messenger”(a funny looking manhole with patterns carved on it and nails drilled into it)appeared, with the figure of a certain professor rising as he guffaws

“Ah – ngh um um, ah - Ho Ho Ho!"

His shoulders shook up and down as he laughed strangely. Other items like the binoculars hung around his neck and the magnifying glass began to jiggle.

His thick glasses reflect the Flame Haze coming over to take on the ‘Torch of the night party’—a stranger with a familiar flame.

Through the image produced from the Self-crystallization of outstanding No. 4122—‘The philosopher’s eye’, which was installed on the ‘Torch of the night party’, the professor was able to set up his own deflecting-type Jizaihō at will.

When that Flame Haze flew over, with the bright red eyes and wings displaying all their glory, he suddenly turned towards that direction, causing the other party to crash into the concrete wall, and fall onto the road below the viaduct, set up a banana peel below her feet. Causing

the Flame Haze, who has the appearance of a young girl, to trip and fall.

“Hm—umumum, it is an EXCELLENT result—”

The professor was satisfied that he was able to introduce the interfering action which controls the will of the opponent without any time lag.

Unfortunately, the banana peel does not cause people to fall with their legs overturned like those in movies. He was unsatisfied about it, and thought if he should change the type of banana peel, or continue to examine the ‘Self-crystallization’, like a tank which can do a somersault.....

(How about---this, let’s choose the latter--)

At this point, his trail of thoughts were interrupted by his assistant.

“Professor—since a while ago, those Flame Hazes were flying around all over the city, like they have came up with some sort of a plan. Should we rearrange the positions of all the causes and effects ib burps ib burps (it hurts it hurts)!”

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The mechanical arms attached onto the manhole were twisting the head of Domino, which were what's left of its body.

“Do—mi—no—What are you—spouting nonsense about? This—is to measure the range of effectiveness, do we have the need to activate it--? Come to think about it, that large Jizaihō has already been activated twice already, what will you –do if your ‘Power of Existence’—were to be used up? Even if a ‘Rinne’ like you can eat human beings, but if I weren’t—around you could not have done it right?”

“Yosb—im sorbet (Yes—I’m sorry).”

He finally released the mechanical hands.

“Do not think—too much about it now, talk afterwards when you finish your mission--?”

Domino stroked his cheek as it spoke:

“Come to think about it, even though we are interfering with their actions, we can’t finish our real job, also, there is another Flame Haze in front of the station, what should we donibburpibburp (do, it hurts it hurts)!”



Domino's face was twisted again before it could even finish.

"Luckily—we haven't used your—power, why don't you just—carry out the job—smoothly and quickly, can't you even think regarding this minor—issue?"

"(Because you were letting your imagination run wild , it hurts it hurts!)"

Margery tried hard to maintain her balance.

"Uh, ah, Well!?"

The "Grimoire" floating in the air was also affected by the interference, and tossed around all over the place.

"Hey, it wasn't an attack, so how did this happen?"

"God knows! Actually, no 'Power of Existence' was used up, how were they able to use this complicated trick , WATCH OUT!"

"Who knows...WAA!?"

The force which forced them to float upwards caused them to fly into a completely unintended direction. The two were forced tossed away from the train station for about 2 to 3 blocks away.

“Wa-oh!?”

“Ah-ou!?”

The two made weird noises as they fell onto the ground.

After several seconds of silence, Margery lay on the ground, and muttered:

“Ah—if that’s the case, that flame-haired brat is probably having a hard time.”

Marchosias spoke as if he did not need to be told:

“As—expected, getting out of this city is just impossible, anyway, we need to get rid of this interfering Jizaihō quickly, or we would not be able to fly properly”

After discussing for half a second, the two immediately became more alert.

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Because within a small proximity, there was a weak yet refined presence of the ‘Power of Existence.’

“Is a ‘Rinne’ coming at me?)

(No—idea, I do remember that that idiotic inventor has only ‘Assistant Domino’ as his minion.)

Through a silent communication that only they understood, they immediately jumped and went to the wall above the corner where that presence is coming from, preparing to hunt her prey.

“Al—right, now.....”

“Hold up!—Um, eh?”

Margery, who has flipped the pages of the “Grimoire” and was preparing to fire fireballs, cancelled the activation of the **Jizaihō** with much difficulty.

Looking at the corner, someone was moving towards them..... or more accurately, towards where they would have appeared, raising an extremely broad and large sword.

Facing Margery’s growls.....

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“Most—importantly, what was that joke about, bringing that ‘Blutsauger’?”

Forcing Marchosias to inquire:

Was the skinny figure who was paralysed due to fear and nervousness, Satou Keisaku.

Yuji was facing off against the Flame Haze -- "Gisō no Karite" Khamsin, who he met for the first time.

His bright eyes were fixated on this superhuman, while showing his anger with heavy breathing. Although the person in front looked younger than Shana, he has a strong and steady presence.

Khamsin was naturally unfazed, and looked back at this ‘Mystes’ boy with the ‘Reiji Maigo’ in him.

Ever since the moment he dropped down to introduce himself, Yuji was making the same face throughout; but he gasped upon hearing that Khamsin was a tuner (But not the reason Khamsin initially thought). At that moment however, his surprise was replaced by an even stronger anger. Like the roar he made just now.

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Khamsin could easily guess the reason he was angry. However, he need not confirm ‘that trivial issue’, and needed to get to the important point first.

“Ah ah, actually I got something to ask you—”

“Why ?”

“--?”

He was preparing to go straight to the point, but was immediately interrupted.

Seems like this boy has been with the ‘Enpatsu Shakugan no Uchite’ and ‘Chōshi no Yomite’ for quite a while, and got used to the presence and vigor emitted by Flame Hazes. Trying to use vigor to overcome the other party, or even force the other party to follow, would be difficult.

(Ah ah, even if it is not so, it’s also probably because he’s very smart.)

He thought as he waited for the ‘Mystes’ boy to respond.

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Although he interrupted Khamsin, Yuji seems to have trouble in coming up with a question. After several seconds, he chose the simplest and most direct question.

“Why did you bring her in?”

Khamsin leisurely replied:

“Because she’s a suitable candidate for helping me in my tuning work.”

He did not speak any more, his expression hidden under the hood.

Yuji could not think due to his anger, and as he saw the indifference in the attitude of the other party, he could not help but shout:

“I’m not talking about this!”

Khamsin remained poised, and gave a sentimental blow to the juvenile from under his hood.

“Ah ah, you mean that she saw through your ‘Mystes’ identity?”

“!!”

Yuji could not reply

Behemoth did not want to waste any more time, and went in for the kill:

“Hmm, were you unhappy over the destruction of that lady’s peaceful life? Or were you angry that your disguise as a human has been seen through? Which one is it?”

In order to finish a mission, these two will pull out all the stops. Rather than their mission, their judgment told them that there was no time to play this childish and stupid game of debating.

Facing Yuji, who was utterly unable to make a comeback, Khamsin continued:

“Ah ah, however, your anger would be a humiliation to the choice that the young lady made. We did advise the young lady not to explore the truth..... or your secret.”

“Hmm, but since the young lady made what she thought was ‘the best decision’, you’re making a mistake for blaming us for it.”

Behemoth delivered the final blow, rendering Yuji speechless. No matter how smart he were, as a human, his experience pales in comparison to them. A disgruntled kid less than 20 years old was rightly refuted by their statements, causing the anger present from the beginning to vanish. With difficulty, in a tone waiting to agree with them, he spoke weakly:

“But, but then..... like this.....”

However, the two tuners will not talk about sentimentality.

“Ah ah, now is not the time to talk about this, you should understand this well right?”

Once he saw that he has defeated the boy emotionally, and that all the other layouts are in place, Khamsin finally went straight to the point.

“There’s something I need you to help out in.”

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“Hmm, I guess you realized it, we were unable to attack against the enemy. To be honest, we can’t tell the intentions of the enemy. So we come to you for your instincts and intellect that the ‘Chōshi no Yomite’ heavily recommended.”

“.....To me?”

Using words to attack the enemy mercilessly, but audacious enough to ask for help when required. The motive behind this conversation was probably to gain the initiative.....Yuji certainly did not like it, but his mind, which has been beaten to a pulp and calmed down, could understand this.

Even if he could not accept it, they were right.

Right now, there’s a large and dangerous presence approaching Misaki City at an alarming pace. Yuji could understand this. The two tuners in front of him have spoken an undeniable fact, trying to refute would be futile.

But.....

(--“‘Chōshi no Yomite’ heavily recommends”--?)

Yuji wanted to ask this question which is completely unrelated to the strategy. But their explanation did not seem substantial enough.

To make up for this shortcoming, he asked:

“.....Have you seen Shana?”

Khamsin remembered that Alastor seemed to have called her this, and so replied:

“Ah ah, ‘Enpatsu Shakugan no Uchite’ right, we met her, so what?”

“.....”

Yuji thought, since they met her, why wasn’t there ‘even a single word’.

Compared to the praise of others, he wanted to hear what she has to say about him. Even if it’s only two to three words, he wanted the attention of the girl who abandoned him and headed for the battlefield, he need the proof of his ability.

“Shana she..... did she say anything about me?”

Khamsin's instincts told him the meaning behind this question, but he bluntly replied.

"Uh uh, no, 'Absolutely none'."

"Is that so?....."

Yuji heavily dropped his shoulders, and anyone nearby can tell that he was depressed. He quickly lifted his head soon, because there is something even more important that needs to be done. Or should I say, something that needs to be done a while ago but wasn't done. Now at least he could use this way—

"Firstly, could you please tell me the details regarding your tuning work?"

Seeing Yuji's attitude, a great deal of surprise was added onto the hidden expressions of the two.

Although Yuji's voice and body seems to be worn out, his glimmering eyes seems to contain some thoughts.

Trying to describe the machine would be too complicated . In a certain room stashed with metal and other spare parts.....

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“Uhm-- ngh um um, ah - Ho Ho Ho! This situation is EX-CELLENT~!”

More accurately, it is in the control cabin of the strange looking train ‘Torch of the Night Party’, which is heading forward at full speed. The professor was delighted, because during this time of research, searching for a distortion, tracking a tuner, testing several items for use, the results of this experiment would be fruitful, a rarity for him.

The item placed in one corner, together with the one placed beside Domino, are a pair. It’s the Self-crystallization of outstanding No. 7931—‘Calling of the messenger’, a manhole that emits a Jizaihō capable of allowing communication. This Jizaihō is located on the platform of Misaki City train station, where the ‘Torch of the Night Party’ is heading towards now, and is currently becoming part of the framework.

(This time, in case those stupid Flame Hazes were to come over and interfere, I have set up—several countermeasures--..... even if that—‘Gisō no Karite’, famous for his destructive ability, were to come over, it would be im—possi—ble to break through this interfering Jizaihō and attack us—uhg-- ngh um um!)

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Oh yeah! The professor's shoulders trembled as he thought:

(The enemy would go around staying tire—lessly that ..... like 'I would be extremely in—terested.' However, I would delay my answer, till this experiment is over.....)

The professor understood that 'one of the results' of this experiment would affect himself.

However, he was also clear that this experiment involves several factors, variables, concepts, countermeasures, methods, tactics and willpower. It's a large and major experiment, rare even for him. Because he's taking part this time, he understood this clearly.

To him, the great interest in the fruitful results of this major experiment is more important to the meaning to his life.

It's just that simple to him; there isn't any need for any other reason.

In his mind, there's only 'try first, talk later', no need to care about any other thing, and once he gets the results, he'll use it for his next experiment. He has never

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thought of whether there would be a next time, which is why he is called a mad man.

(Now that—I think about it, there is no--thing special over—there left, most importantly, the guy responsible for this party—is rumored to be missing for the past few years.)

He revealed an intriguing smile, and his eyes gazed upon those wires and pipes that were displayed on what seems like a very old screen, together with several cars parked in front of the station. The signals besides the rail were all red.

“Hm--! Let me see.....?”

The professor sat down, ‘stretched his hand’ towards the extremely low ceiling, and pulled out something which looks like a periscope. He put on his glasses and peered into it, magnifying the image. He could see the attendant swinging the flag beside the train, above the platform.

“Uhm-- ngh um um, ah - Ho Ho Ho! Unfort—unately, you ain’t—strong enough to—block this Self-crystallization of outstanding No. 29182—‘Torch of the Night Party’ from getting to its destination!”

Making an explanation that would have been interpreted wrongly, the professor swung his shoulders wildly. He would definitely not stop, and to prove his determination, he forcefully pulled the rope beside him.

“Pa CHOO--!” The whistle installed on the exterior was blown.

From the periscope, he saw the attendant, who sensed his intentions, panic and ran away from the platform. The professor forcefully swung his shoulders again, and a scene depicting a train crash was about to unveil.

“Ngh—ACTI—VATE!”

A “PaCha!” sound was heard as steam was released, and like a sharp and hard ram used for ramming a city’s gates down, the front of the train was covered in a bright green glow.

The front of the train touched the stationary trains.

The professor shouted at this point:

"E - cellent! E - xciting!!!"

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“Powkinkinkinkinking”—the sounds of the collisions and breakages between these hard objects spread towards the control cabin. Clank clank, everything was shaking, machinery and spare parts were flying all over the place, sparks were flying, everything became dark, even steam was released. However, the ‘Torch of the Night Party’ not only destroyed all eight of the trains that weren’t moving, there wasn’t a decrease in speed, as the train proceeded on.

From the control room, it was visible that he suddenly grabbed his hair, as the professor pulled himself from the periscope. After a ‘Pak’ sound, black rings were formed around his eyes. From the items hung around his neck, he tried to grab a handheld mirror.

“.....”

Staring at that face which looks like a panda for several seconds, the professor went to the manhole-- ‘Self-crystallization of outstanding No. 7931—‘Calling of the messenger’, and turned it on. He took a deep breath, and barked, wanting to think of a reason after that:

“DO---MINO----!!”



Yoshdia Kazumi did not know what to do.

“Sakai oba-san, are you alright? Oba-san!?”

Sakai Chigusa, who was originally sitting down and listening to her, did not move. There was no reaction could be observed.

“Ah, AHAH!”

Yoshida looked like she was going to collapse from crying, as she kept shaking Chigusa’s shoulders. However, her expression did not change by the slightest, her eyes were expressionless.

“Somebody, somebody help--!!

Yoshida stopped after speaking halfway.

Everyone—the huge crowd at the festival, lost all expressions and life, as they stood around motionlessly. What was left were loud music that seems to come from a radio, which echoed around this still and silent crowd.

“Sniff, umum—”

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Yoshida forced out a cry of despair for what seems like the umpteenth time, as she held onto Chigusa's shoulders.

Like before, she wanted to close her eyes, and run away from everything in front of her.

At this moment.....

(This is where Sakai-kun is.)

Her mind was filled with the image of a certain boy.

(This is where Sakai-kun and Yukari-chan are.)

Sakai Yuji 'is here'.

As she thought, she tried hard to open her eyes that were filled with tears.

(Don't worry, don't worry, because this is where they are, I have to perk myself up.)

She encouraged herself even though there was nothing around for support.

(I know this feeling. It has been around since a while ago.)

Just by instincts alone, one could roughly understand the reasons.

The strange occurrences did not encompass the entire area right from the start and distort the power in Misaki City. In fact, the opposite was true. The tuning capabilities used to correct the distortions in Misaki City were out of control, which causes the continuously calming waves to occur. This affected everyone really severely.

In other words, because everyone was affected by ‘some tuner function which causes calm’, they were able to accept several minor changes all around, thus everything else would seem normal to them.

(What can I do?)

Even though she’s powerless, she knows someone who can do something.

Maybe the Denizens who started this are lurking around..... Once she thought of this, she trembled. Even

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though she was sitting down, she closed her legs and held her knees together. In this night wind, a chill struck, far more than the skin can sense.

(But, but then.....)

Not only is her weak self, even the lady in front of her who taught her all these important issues in danger. This fact meant that she cannot back away at this point.

Yoshida prepared to stand up on the stairs near the embankment, but nearly fell down. She then bent her weak knees again, before finally straightening herself.

Compared to sitting down, the riverside seems to look even wider when standing. The music blasting from the music players, generators creating noise, thick, white fumes floating upwards; however, in the midst of all these, there are several people standing around..... this scene can only be described as bizarre.

Even so, Yoshida spoke to Chigusa, who was sitting beside her motionlessly and looking forward, partly to boost her own confidence.

“O-, oba-san, please wait for me.”

Her voice was trembling, but not weak.

“I’m going to look for Sakai-kun or Khamsin!  
Everything’s gonna be okay!!”

She knew of someone, and that someone is at Khamsin’s position.

Because just now, she saw something like Khamsin’s brown glow descend somewhere hidden behind. And she heard a roar that would melt anyone’s heart.

Maybe that place is where Khamsin and the Denizens are battling, but the prince would not lose. Yoshida held on to this belief, her white clogs create loud footsteps.

“I’m.....I’m leaving.”

Everyone was motionless as she left Chigusa on the steps near the embankment, where the wind gently blows the grass. She ran in small steps, as her legs were weak due to fear and anxiety, making her unable to go all out. While fatigued more than she was panting.....

(Maybe, I would end up finding Sakai-kun first.....)

Facing this unexpected situation, something was formed within her heart.....a determination to just get on with it. Her hope was placed on that brown flame, as she cried out someone's name in her heart as she ran.

That name was not of the Flame Haze who she was looking for.

(Sakai-kun!)

Margery did not hold back as she scolded:

“You idiot!”

Satou could not shrink in fear any more; his head couldn't be lower any further.

“Giving you power is not for you to swing this thing around! If just swinging a sword is able to beat the ‘Denizens’, we wouldn't have to put in so much effort! And you usually say that you are my attendant! IT'S MOST IMPORTANT TO FOLLOW MY INSTRUCTIONS IN THIS CRITICAL SITUATION RIGHT!!!”

Satou's shoulders were trembling; he was unable to make any comeback.

Marchosias timed himself, ready to interrupt:

"Do you know Eita-boy, my violent big sister Margery Daw, even me, we're all worried about you!"

Satou lowered his head, arcing his entire body. His motion looked like if he were to bend any more, he would break like a clay doll.

Margery, who was panting with anger, pulled out a strip from the "Grimoire":

"Really, you just have to casually waste..... "

As she rattled on, she gave a strip to Satou. Seeing the boy not even lifting his head up, she impatiently and forcefully shook the boy's shoulders to straighten him up

"Ah.....!"

Normally, his face shows that he's putting up an act. Although he didn't cry, he face reveals reluctance to

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accept the power disparity, regret for doing such a stupid thing, and anger over being caught red-handed here. The numerous emotions caused his facial expression to be distorted.

Margery was okay with the look of men being emotional. Of course, she could not give him a good look just because of this. She maintained her scowl as she changed the topic:

“What kind of person would not even look at a present given to him from a lady? That’s why you’ll are brats!”

“.....yes.”

“Okay!”

Margery tucked another strip into Satou’s yukata

“I’m confiscating this sword, and you must reach the ‘Haridan’ this time!”

“Then Margery nee-san?”

“Do not rebut back!”

Hearing this roar, Satou stood up straight:



“Yes!”

“I’m going to look for that flame-haired brat, and bring her to the ‘Haridan’.....oh yeah!”

Margery had a flash of inspiration. She then pointed at the other strip with her fingertip--- not the one that was put into the youth’s collar.

“When you reach the ‘Haridan’, at the top floor of that building, shout out: ‘Change the location to the Treasure cover’.”

“Okay, ‘Change the location to the Treasure cover’ right..... what would happen after that?”

This time, he asked a question obediently.....

“You’ll know once you do it.”

Margery simply replied.

“Uh—hem, I really don’t understand you, you’re actually surprisingly gentle, my kind—“

Marchosias was interrupted mid-sentence by Margery’s cold tone.

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“Of course, there has to be punishment. Eita, do you hear me? I found Keisaku, and he’s alright.”

While she spoke, she lightly tapped Satou’s forehead, allowing him to hear Tanaka, who was still waiting at the ‘Haridan’.

“Really?”

Hearing that delightful tone, Satou was ashamed, and felt his tears were about to gush out.

Then, in order to hurt his feelings, Margery immediately exposed the truth.

“That’s because this kiddo went out on his own to get the ‘Blutsauger’, wanting to fight with a ‘Denizen’ on his own and getting credit for it.”

“WHAT!?”

The tone changed to astonishment.

It was this moment that Satou realized that he has carried out an act of betrayal to his best friend, and was startled, having felt a heavy sense of guilt. The goal that only these two have was replaced by impulse and

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rampage. Once he felt how stupid he was to not realize it , and get caught up by passion, he trembled.

Margery did not care about his reaction, and continued:

“I’ll leave him to you; do whatever you want with him .”

“.....”

“.....”

Both parties could not speak up, remaining silent.

Satou prepared himself mentally, and Tanaka quickly replied:

“I’ll beat him good, that’ll do.”

“---Ugh.....”

“ANSWER!”

Margery really wanted the punishment to at least be implemented. Tears rolled down Satou's cheeks, his cool and handsome persona was demolished as he replied vexfully.

"Yes."

"I think I have a plan....."

After hearing what Khamsin knows and the entire plan, Yuji replied frankly.

The two excellent tuners were amazed:

"Ah ah, that's fast.....?"

"Uh hm?"

Hearing those two, Yuji did not react too much, as he just shut his lips tight.

"....."

Khamsin and Behemoth could tell that Yuji wasn't upset because of what he said, and wasn't trying to be

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funny. He was full of hesitation. Now why would he feel that now?

The duo could guess the reason. Khamsin looked back from under the hood, waiting for Yuji to speak up.

“.....”

Yuji was rather upset about their attitude.

He felt that this tactic could work to some extent, but did not have to guts to say it out directly. However, the two tuners were sitting back, waiting for him to explain. He knew that time was running out, and thus took action .

“.....”

Yuji did not intend to reply, and at the moment when he was going to complain about this.....

“Ah ah, is it because of that young lady?”

Khamsin went directly to the point.

“!!” These two are so irritating! Yuji gave a condemning look at Khamsin.

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However, the two were unmoved by all these.

“Uh hm, now why is this so?”

Behemoth saw that Yuji was having difficulty trying to speak up, and deliberately tried to dig out an answer. These two are really irritating.

“.....But then.....”

From what they were asking, Yuji again reflected on whether his thinking was correct. He knew that time was short, and from a while ago, sensed that that ‘Crimson Lord’, although not knowing whether he’s flying or running, is approaching. Instead of thinking by himself, he felt, why not ask other people for advice.

(It’s the same even if I ask it now.....)

The atmosphere of the festival in front of him was eerie, strange, and frozen. Everyone became quiet, only the sounds of music and electronics went on and on. Once the ‘Crimson Lord’ arrives, nobody knows what’s going to happen. They need to stop the enemy from reaching Misaki City station and executing his plans.

He was aware of that.

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But, even so.....

“Ah ah, you aren’t willing to involve the young lady? Why is this so? Is it because you have a crush on her, that’s why you cherish her so much?”

“Why.....why do you have to talk about this.....”

Yuji could only vaguely reply at Khamsin’s sudden question.

Behemoth continued:

“Uh hm, in this sort of situation, I feel that this is an important question to ask:

Yuji’s heart ached as he thought of her frightened expression at that moment. He dug his feeling out of that painful memory and answered:

“.....Yoshida-san, is a very kind girl.”

He felt regretful after saying it, wondering how he was able to do such a cruel thing to her.

Thinking about how he let her interact with such ‘a thing’, the blow when she understood ‘the truth of this world’.

He really wanted to return back to that area where he could never return back to.

“Even though she got involved in this, I will definitely not allow her to come to this world full of sadness when she’s mentally unprepared. If possible, I would like to return her to her own world.....”

He thought of that girl’s smile.

The bento she made for him was delicious.

When she declared that she would not lose to Shana, he was shocked.

They went to the art gallery in a date.

When he heard them talk loudly in the showers, he could not help but blush.

Ike’s meddling caused her to be angry.

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Then, today....., the few minutes up till now at the festival.

He managed to think of so much in such a short time, and if he were to continue, there would be a lot more. It would naturally be what he would wish for.

“Yoshida-san should wait at ‘that place’ where I’m lost.”

Seeing that he was so confident, Khamsin glimpsed at him from under the hood, and came up with another surprising question:

“Ah ah, then that girl called Shana, isn’t she the same?”

Why would he ask this? Yuji thought, though he replied:

“Shana is different.”

Compared to his answer regarding Yoshida, where he was careful and indecisive, hesitating before answering, his answer now is confident and without doubt:

“Shana’s a Flame Haze, and she chose that lifestyle, firmly believing in that goal of hers. She has already made the mental preparations to live that lifestyle, and is progressing on.”

(!!—Yeah--)

A thought went past Yuji as he said his answer definitely.

When the two separated.....

(--“Forget about ‘these trivial stuff’!!”--)

Shana’s expression was mixed with superiority, anxiety and forcefulness—she pretended to use the mission of the Flame Haze as an excuse to beat out Yoshida Kazumi—she was extremely angry regarding this ‘truth’, that’s why she shouted back—Yuji finally realized it.

(That’s right, because.....she forgot that she ‘chose to finish the goal of the Flame Haze’, that’s why I’m angry .....)

Just when he was to give an answer.....

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“That Shana, is she that Yukari-chan?”

“!?”

Behind him, a familiar voice came out, although it shouldn't be here, Yuji's heart shivered, and he turned around.

“!!Yoshida-san.....”

Yoshida Kazumi did not hide, as she silent stood behind him—beside the tent.

Because there's still a lot of noise, and no ordinary folk is able to move about, he got careless, and did not notice her presence.

He suddenly realized it, and turned to Khamsin.

“No wonder you were asking those strange questions .....!”

“Ah ah, seems like the ‘mystes’ who has the ‘Reiji Maigo’ is unable to sense human presence.”

Khamsin giggled under the hood.

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Yuji decided from then on to classify Khamsein as ‘one who I would never get a good impression on’.

His partner Behemoth continued:

“Ho hum, there was some suffering due to our carelessness, so this is just a small repayment.”

Yuji wanted to scold them, but Yoshida immediately went beside him.

“Sakai-kun”

“.....Eh, this.....what’s the matter?”

That eloquent tongue just now has not become stiff, as he stuttered.

Yoshida clasped her hands together in front of her, and took a deep bow:

“I’m sorry that I ran away.”

“Yoshida-san, don’t do this!”

Yoshida grabbed Yuji's hand as he went to pull her up. Her hands were as soft as whitebait, soft yet soft in this night wind.

Yoshida lowered her head, putting Yuji's hand on her forehead as she apologized:

".....I'm always like this. Daydreaming all the time, running away when things don't go the way I see it, crying, not admitting that I'm wrong.....I'm not a kind girl, just a timid one, always overwhelmed by everyone else, I'm completely useless."

Yuji blushed as he remembered that he used the 'kind girl' phrase.

"You.....how long were you listening?"

Yoshida lifted her slightly red face.

"From when Khamsin asked, 'Is it because of me?'."

Seems like she heard everything.

The other party is a Flame Haze, and looks rather detached from society, thus he could not sense a hint of

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human emotion; he thought. Thus he unsuspectingly revealed how he truly felt.....and just his luck for these words to be heard by Yoshida Kazumi herself. Yuji felt embarrassed and wanted to dig a hole and burrow in it.

At this moment, Yoshida said:

“Mental preparation.....”

“Eh?”

Yuji, who’s rather confused, wondered when he said this phrase.

“I’m mentally prepared now, to follow Sakai-kun to that place.”

“No way!”

Yuji immediately rejected.

Yoshida revealed a surprised yet calm expression, continuing on:

“But Yukari-chan has prepared herself.....”

“Shana is the same as Khamsin here, a Flame Haze, a special form of existence! Yoshida-san is an ordinary human, don’t you know!?”

“Sakai-kun, are you similar to Khamsin .....and Yukari, un.....Shana?”

Yuji did not know what to do. He felt that Yoshida now is full of vigor, and wondered whether it was because she really prepared herself, before shaking his head. He cannot agree with her easily. And no matter the outcome, he could not agree with it, definitely not.

With this bitterness in his heart, Yuji finally admitted:

“I’m.....I’m not a Flame Haze.”

Yuji painfully explained to the girl in front of him.

“I’m a special torch, a ‘mystes’ with a ‘Hōgu’ inside. I have a power which can help the Flame Haze. Not like a real ordinary human like Yoshida-san, so I can continue to stay in this world without a problem.....No, I should say, I’m an existence that’s powerless even if I’m pulled in.”

---

He intended to use a hard stance to emphasize their differences, too bad it didn't work.

She immediately made a rebuttal:

“But, Sakai-kun knows how to save the city I live in, right? Then, since Sakai-kun and I want to help, by this meaning alone, we're on the same side.”

“Um.....”

Yuji dug his own grave, unable to reply.

Yoshida spoke to Yuji directly:

“Sakai-kun, you are a human.”

“!!”

Even though it's a simple sentence, her sincerity touched Yuji.

Yoshida placed Yuji's hand, which she has been holding, onto her breasts.

The two enjoyed this warm.

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“For that person to describe me like this, he’s definitely not human.”

The uneasy weakness began to peel off from her smile. What replaced it was a warm, growing smile that matches great power.

“.....Yoshida-san.....”

Yoshida’s heartbeat conveyed to her hand.

Powerful and fast, proof that she’s alive.

The two share this same heartbeat.

Yuji did not know what to say to stop her.

He could only accept her.

Yoshida silently warmed Yuji’s hand.

It belongs to the two of them, what remains were heartbeats.....

“Ah ah, now then, since you two have a common understanding, I hope we can continue what we were discussing a while ago.”

---

They were suddenly interrupted by Khamsin.

“Ho hum, because time’s really short here.”

“Ah, so.....sorry!”

Yoshida seemed to only realize what she was doing now, and pushed Yuji’s hand away, which was placed on her chest. She even forgot that she was doing something bold, as she blushed while lowering her head.



“.....”

Yuji really didn't like Khamsin.

From afar, 'Seeking Researcher' Dantalion is approaching at an extremely fast pace

Shana, who has intended to fly to the outskirts to fight the enemy head on, fails, and has now given up on it. She started flying around the city, trying to find a hint or something that can turn the tide around.

I cannot act rashly without understanding the attack range and capabilities of the enemy.....Shana thought. It's an excuse because she's afraid to find Yuji..... she's afraid to get near him when he's angry.

Beside the girl, weaving through skyscrapers, Margery is gliding on the "Grimoire", which is spouting out deep blue flames. The two Flame Hazes went on in similar speeds. She places her elbow on her raised knee, and asks the girl who did not look at her, only caring about flying.

“Hey, how long do you intend to fly around and waste time? Even though being far away from the station would not affect you.”

“I’m not wasting time. I’m trying to find a way to get out of this city.”

“Ai—yo, Missy, don’t throw a tantrum, why don’t you look for that kid hu—ngh? Be careful, or else you’ll regret it, hehehe!”

Marchosias spoke teasingly.

“I’m collecting data for Yuji’s reference.”

Shana continued to focus on her flying.

Margery sighs, and spoke out her main purpose:

“Hey, ‘Tenjō no Gōka’.”

Unexpectedly being called out, the pendant hanging on Shana’s chest replied:

“What’s the matter?”

“I remember you were a survivor of the last war right?”

“.....Yeah.”

A deep voice like rumbling thunder was heard, with a tinge of sadness. He lost his ex-partner in the previous war.

“I heard of this near Shanghai from the ‘Banjō no Shite’  
Wilhelmina.”

“You met Wilhelmina!?”

Shana gave a delighted expression like a girl of her own age.

Her reaction shocks Margery, who then stretched her hand out:

“It was two years ago, I heard that her target has escaped to the Middle Eastern region, so she came over for preparations.”

Understanding that the girl wants to listen, Marchosias deliberately mocked her loudly:

“He he! She’s the same as Tiamat, cold and unsociable! Though now that I mention it, her clumsy actions and her maid outfit, even if she can’t catch up with the times, there has to be a limit to all these.”

“Do you have to care about others that—much?”

Margery interrupts at this moment. Shana looks unsatisfied but did not say a word.

“What I’m trying to say, is that the cause of the war was due to self-containment.”

Alastor understands the meaning of her question:

“Do you mean, that ‘this place’ could become like that?”

“Right now, the situation now is like what that emotionless woman said. At first, there was a lot of Denizens eating, and births of new torches, the ‘Denizens’ were attracted by the distortion, and the Flame Haze came over. Both sides fought each other, the ‘Denizens’ continued to feast, causing both camps to grow.”

“Until the end, a certain major player came in with his lackeys, intending to carry out a plan, then ‘Bam’, he destroyed everything, he—hehehe!”

Hearing Marchosias’ frivolous laughter, Alastor spoke in a displeased tone:

“The situation is rather similar, ever since the city was attacked by ‘Denizens’, the number of events that occurred between both sides has been phenomenal. Like the last time, where we ended up ‘mourning the dead’, it is likely a ‘Masquerade’ to carry out a conspiracy, isn’t it?”

Alastor paused, then expressed his worries.

“In our history, there would be this sort of city appearing. A ‘royal rumble’ which would attract both ‘Denizens’ and Flame Hazes to battle.”

Margery looked away from Alastor, and like Shana, she did not have a specific target as she looked in front, asking:



“Then, when this is over.....’standing on the side of the Flame Hazes’, do you feel that leaving this city is the best option?”

Alastor then begins to speak out his lamentations sincerely:

“.....I didn’t expect to have the chance to explain this ‘common knowledge’ to the ‘Chōshi no Yomite’.”

“What—do—you mean?”

“He—he, he! Exactly what it means, like a wild bull attending a buffet!”

“Shut up, Marcho! How do you feel about this?”

“.....”

Alastor sensed that Shana was holding her breath and staring at him, waiting for an answer, as the employer who gives Flame Hazes their mission and powers, he answered succinctly.

“Supposing the Flame Haze does not become the target, he should still stay.”

---

“.....!”

“This is a really major incident, and there’s a lot of work to be done after this, together with the ‘work outside the Fūzetsu’, it’s unavoidable that we have to stay a bit longer.”

Margery’s lips cannot conceal her smile.

“Ho, hum.....”

“He—shishishi! Congratulations on finally finding an excuse to stay, My dear!”

“What are you spouting nonsense about! I mean that there might be a battle, maybe even a large scale one! When I knew more about ‘that guy’ the first time I was here, I felt that there should be some significance.”

Marchosias did not smile or laugh this time.

The four of them begin to feel silent.

At this moment.....

Margery raised her head:

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“Hey, those geezers have met up with the brat, and there’s a special guest as well> They say they want to hold a tactical meeting.

Shana revealed an embarrassed expression, even Margery, who was speaking, is feeling some pity for her.

In place of his partner, Alastor spoke up:

“That ‘Seeking Researcher’ will set up a lot of traps, even if we were to think of some methods, it would be difficult for us to see through it. Even if you don’t like it, we.....why don’t we look for Sakai Yuji and see what he has to say. No problems right, Shana?”

Shana whispered:

“.....Um.”

“Then follow me.”

Margery change the direction that the “Grimoire” is heading towards, and the bright red wings soon followed her.

They can already sense the fast approaching presence.

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On a level in Yoda shopping centre, in the pile of toys, Margery's voice came out from the 'Haridan' which displays a model of Misaki City.

"Has Keisaku reached there already?"

The voice came from the deep blue flame.

'Yes, only a while ago.'

The one who answered is sitting cross-legged on the tallest commercial building.....Tanaka Eita , who's sitting on the mini-duplicate of Yoda shopping centre.

"Oh yeah, nee-san, that Jizaihō used for defensive purposes is now encircling everything again. What's going on?"

As he speaks, a Jizaishiki that emits a deep blue flame surrounds him, it looks like a hula hoop.

"It's alright; no direct damage up till now, it's just a form of protection. We'll be there soon, prepare yourself."  
"

This defensive mechanism which protects him from the ‘Denizens’ seems to activate automatically. He felt really loved by Margery, the self-proclaimed lackey Tanaka replies loudly:

“Yes!”

When the connection is interrupted, Tanaka looked at the strip in his hand. When he used it at first, it was shining brightly.

Now, the glow is as dim as a small light bulb. He proceeded to keep the strip in his yukata, and jump off his hotseat.

“It’s about to run out.....”

Satou is also surrounded by the deep blue defensive mechanism like him, waiting for him on the miniature road. Embarrassed, he did not look at him directly.

“Ah? Oh.”

He stuttered:

“Oh what oh? Hurry up and get up. This is a really rare opportunity!”

Kind ol’ Tanaka did not mind about what happened earlier, but this made Satou felt regretful. After several seconds, he finally stepped onto the model tower, in order to carry out Margery’s orders.

His back facing Tanaka, Satou cowardly asked Tanaka:

“Hey, weren’t you going to punch me?”

Tanaka has already reached the tower in the ‘Haridan’ where Margery and company were heading to.

He turned around casually, and replies loosely.

“I’ll beat you up on the day you mess with me.”

Conversely, Satou spoke sullenly:

“Beat me now.”

“Time is of the essence now, nee-san and her comrades are reaching there now, we must hurry.”

“ .....

Tanaka was right.

This only made Satou feel even more inferior. He felt guilty about Tanaka's understanding, and was unsatisfied. He stood on the top of the tower. Standing at the same position as Margery, the strong lady who they really admire, this weak boy who could not be compared to her then take out the strip that Margery gave to him,

“ .....

He spoke like he was trying to confirm it, trying to prevent any mistakes.

Hearing this sentence and the willpower that Margery has placed in the strip, the Hōgu 'Haridan' gave a gentle, rumbling sound.

“Wa!?”

Satou exclaims as he sees the hill of toys around the miniature landscape disperses.

The miniature landscape is the source of these tremors, as it removes the toys that were bound to it. It feels like

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Gravity is gone, as all the toys and spare parts float in the air.

Tanaka start to shout out as well:

“What the hell!?”

“i..... I really followed the order—”

Satou was nervous, wondering whether he’s wrong. As he scrambles around in mid-air, there was a pure white light on his foot.

‘Bam’, a metallic plate the size of roughly two hands pop out from the toys that are flying all over the place. This object then starts to spin with an irregular axis at irregular speeds in mid-air. There were special, delicate and embossed patterns on one side, the other side being a shiny mirror.

The two have seen this in history textbooks.

“Is this a bronze mirror.....?”

Looking at this beautiful antique, Satou cannot help but mumble.



Tanaka is also dazzled by that shininess, and says:

“So this is how.....the ‘haridan’ looks like?”

Soon, as it floats, the bronze mirror ‘haridan’ suddenly changes the energy used to make it float into a fast, flowing gust of wind as strong as a storm. Satou and Tanaka are caught among the countless number of toys that are spinning around, and finally, a bright glow that looks like it’s going to explode.

The two reached the roof.

Looking around, it’s an abandoned amusement park.

Broken circular tents, rusty train tracks, spoilt and greasy trolleys everywhere, rainwater that has accumulated and frozen, etc. The remainder of these old dreams stays quietly in this chilly night breeze.

“Eh?”

“How, how did.....”

The glowing ‘Haridan’ beside these two motionless boys is floating in the air.

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Up till now, the face of the mirror only had a blank image on it. Also, this spinning mirror does not reflect what is in front, that is, the view of Misaki City from a high position.

Out of a sudden, the mirror stops rotating. The mirror faces the cover, which is the sky.....

“Ga chonk!”

“Wa!?”

Satou is startled as the metal pipes beside him suddenly bends.

“Pong Pang!”

“Wow?”

Tanaka jumped away, as the concrete blocks smash in front of him.

Around the surprised duo, everything else, including the frame and plastic canvas of the circular tents, rails, timber railway sleepers, the separated trolleys, glass on the freezer, deform into materials that can be used to make a miniature landscape.

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Integrated seamlessly, everything's skillfully and accurately reproduced. Such a job took less than a minute to complete. Although it's similar to the original model, the miniature model, which is made of different materials, is formed on the rooftop

The glow of the bronze mirror is lost within the model of Yoda building. Besides the Jizaihō around them, there are dim road lights around the tower, faintly showing the outlines of this delicate model.

".....So cool!"

"Yeah, cool."

At this moment, Tanaka notices two bright spots in the night approaching them, and says:

"Nee-san's returning, and there's another red spot."

"It's the Flame Haze opposite them.....together with that 'Mystes' boy right?"

Satou continues to stare at the bright spot flying over at the riverbank. With fear and longing, he asks.

"What sort of people are they?"

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“We’ll know.”

Several seconds later, they met up.

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## Chapter 4-Excitement

Margery, Marchosias, Khamsin and Behemoth are perplexed as they saw them meet each other. Besides the four of them, everyone else is staring at each other in disbelief.

After a while.....

“Satou, Tanaka, why are you here?”

Satou Keisaku retorted:

“We’re asking the same thing! You two are the Flame Haze and the ‘Mystes’? And even Yoshida-san’s here?”

Yoshida Kazumi is surprised, and asks:

“So you already knew long ago that Sakai-kun is a ‘mystes’?”

“No, we only knew of this ‘mystes’ character. We just have no idea who he is..... more importantly, Yukari-chan is the Flame Haze?”

Tanaka Eita presses onto his temple with his thumbs as he asks:

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“Why would these two appear here in such a place?”

Shana shouted at their big sister.

“.....You knew each other?”

“Oh dear, what a small world it is.”

Margery and Marchosias continued to stare at this group of people, saying it in disbelief.

“What are you two thinking about, getting these two involved?”

Alastor spoke from the pendant on Shana’s chest, scaring Satou, Tanaka and Yoshida.

“Ah ah, everyone, please remain calm.”

Khamsin stepped up and then mediates this messy situation.

“Ho hum, might as well include ourselves. Everyone just needs to know each other and where they stand; especially those five who need to explain what they do not know about each other.”

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As Behemoth finished speaking, the crowd became silent.

Khamsin then adds on:

“Ah ah, if you can, make it snappy.”

“If Ike is also around, we can all eat bento.”

Tanaka, who is surrounded by a ring of Jizaihō, spoke out his feelings regarding these revelations as he climbs up the miniature model building onto his own seat.

Sitting on another seat, Yuji, who has overcome his pains and troubles with much difficulty in revealing his secret to Yoshida, feels weak as he has to declare it now to everyone casually.

“I’m surprised that you’re not shocked.”

Sitting on a building opposite Tanaka and protected by the Jizaihō, Satou stares at Yuji with mixed feelings.

“Rather than being scared.....actually, we have always admired this mysterious ‘mystes’ youth. Having eternal life, being able to discuss battle plans with Flame Hazes, having abilities that we don’t even have.....”

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After finishing, he regretted it, and apologizes.

“.....Sorry, I’m talking nonsense carelessly.....”

“Never mind, at least its much better compared to those sympathies.....”

Noticing that Yuji glanced at him, Tanaka says worriedly:

“Is Yoshida-san okay?”

“We knew of Hirai-san only after she ‘changes into Shana’, so it’s okay.....No, not okay at all.....”

Satou feels that as long as he opens his mouth, he’s digging his own grave. He hates himself for this, and kept silent.

Yuji did not say anything else as well, not intending to blame others.

“.....”

Yoshida kept her knees close together, pulling her body inwards as she sits beside Khamsin on a very short building. Her friend ‘Hirai Yukari’ has been eaten

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together with her family and replaced by the Flame Haze named Shana. It is a significant blow to her.

(If I've known sooner, I should have covered it up when we were introducing each other.)

Yuji feels regretful about it, but this will then be unable to explain why Hirai Yukari would become the Flame Haze—Shana. To be honest, Yuji is only mindful about having to expose his true identity to Satou and Tanaka. If it wasn't for Shana explaining all these, he would have forgotten about it.

Shana's personality will not cause her to worry about it, thus, she said it out. After seeing the expression on Yoshida's face, who was hit hard by the explanation, she too looks surprised.....

(Actually, it wasn't intentional on her part.)

Yuji thought.

After Shana finished explaining, she climbs onto the top of a tower slightly far away from Yuji, shutting her eyes as she sits down. She did not make any noise and her eyelids are tightly shut.

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(.....Is she still angry at me?)

Ever since the two of them reached here, Yuji and Shana have not said a single word to each other. Coupled with their separation a while ago, they are feeling tense and alienated as the atmosphere between these two has become a bit awkward.

After a while, Margery shouted from the old Yoda department store in order to gain everyone's attention.

"Okay, the troublesome parts are over, brat..... no, wrong."

Being stared at by Shana's bright red eyes, Margery corrected herself.

"Yuji. Let's start."

".....Okay."

While worried for Yoshida and concerned for Shana, Yuji kept these feelings as he stands up on the top of the building.

Surprisingly, all the people that are present are those he is acquainted with, thus although his feelings are complicated at this point, he's not particularly tense.

"You said that Yoshida-san----"

Seeing Yoshida, who he has called out, standing by his side, he felt relieved, and continued:

"---provided something similar to a prototype.....or a conjured image to restore this city to the original state, right?"

Yuji says to that irritating Khamsin, expecting a reply from him.

Of course, Khamsin did not mind to much about it, and replies:

"Ah ah, this is precisely the case, because of the severe deficiency of existence, distortions are formed. We're using our tuning work to try and achieve what she's comfortable with."

Yuji nodded:

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“Before I came here, I met Yoshida-san beside the river . I was shocked because everyone.....isn’t moving.”

Everyone, including Yuji, who is explaining the situation, Yoshida, Shana, probably Alastor, is looking at the lady placed on the top of a short building.

That lady clad in a yukata—Sakai Chigusa did not look back at everyone, her empty eyes staring in front. Because Yoshida requested for help, Khamsin brought her here.

Everyone on the streets became like this. When Yuji saw this, he felt angry with a sense of danger, but his thoughts became clearer.

“In this situation, Yoshida-san is not affected in any way. I think that it’s because the enemy used the Jizaihō with her as a part, and used it directly into his own Jizaihō.”

“Ah ah, I feel the same. The ‘Seeking Researcher’ did not seem to have activated his own large-scale Jizaihō, but modified our tuning Jizaihō into a part of his experiment.”

Yoshida nodded at Khamsin's speculation. After the occurrences of these anomalies, she has been feeling that the Jizaihō based on her own imagination is distorted by an external force.

Behemoth muttered in a puzzle tone:

“Ho hum, hijacking the tuning process when it starts, manipulating the distortions in this city at will, I can understand everything up till this point. But.....if it is not that ‘Seeking Researcher’ himself, just by using the ‘Rinne’ alone, it is almost impossible to extend this power beyond Misaki City station. It’s only focused on deflecting any attacks or approach attempts by Flame Hazes. This Hōgu---is called the ‘Haridan’ right? Can I use it?”

Standing cross-legged on the tallest building, Margery nodded, and ordered her two attendants:

“Let them have a look.”

Understanding their big sister's well-intentions to let them have an opportunity to perform.....Tanaka, who has learnt the basic controls of it, replies:

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“Yes, nee-san. ‘Appear’!”

Exhausting the last ounce of power from the strip in Tanaka’s hand, the ‘Haridan’, built with brand new materials, mirrored everyone. Because of the Misago festival occurring today, the pavements and roads (due to the interference that caused the traffic jam) are filled with an unusually large number of people. Beside Margery and her attendants, everyone else is astonished when they see this scene.

The simplified images of the crowds remain in situ and motionless. However, in the outlying regions - that is not affected by the calming waves, people continue to move about.

This is not located inside the Fūzetsu.....will there be a problem?”

Shana answers Yuji’s concerns.

“Don’t worry, I’ve checked it out already. If there is anyone who feels that the situation is strange, they will be affected to that peaceful wave, so ‘any activities on the streets will be taken as it is’, and will not cause a serious uproar.”

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“Is it? That’s good.”

“Um.”

Seeing Yuji’s attitude being rather usual, and that her findings are of use, Shana heaved a sigh of relief under her calm expression, a façade.

Margery only looked at Satou, urging him.

Satou enthusiastically—actually, he’s just giving the orders while holding onto the strip—says:

“Ready? Then.....emulate the flow of the ‘Power of Existence’!”

Suddenly, the outlines of the humans that were originally on the streets vanish, leaving behind a few strange flames. These are humans that were eaten by ‘Denizens’, and are made of their own residue--- a torch.

Yoshida could not help but look at Yuji.

She feels that she did something wrong, Yuji senses this as well, and looked back at her. However, his eyes do not have the intent to blame her, only showing a smile with a small trace of sadness.

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Compared to blaming her, this made it even more tense and painful for her.

Yuji immediately focused his attention on the map on the floor.

Ever since who knows when, the map, like it has been rendered, displayed the Jizaishiki and the flow of Jizaihō.

“Amazing.....is this the ‘Power of Existence’?”

Such a thing which can only be sensed normally is now visible to the human eye. Yuji is amazed at this incredible scene.

Satou and Tanaka have a rather empty sense of superiority as they explain:

“It is completely different from the last time against the ‘Aizen siblings’. At that time, the structure was bound together tightly by the Jizaihō like a root of a tree.

“Ah ah, one can see here that the Jizaishiki now is flowing towards the crowded roads. It feels like they’re arranged in a similar way.”

---



Because the area that the Jizaishiki has encompassed is so vast, Khamsin sighs with realization:

“Ah ah, so that’s how it is, since the range of the Jizaishiki is so large, no wonder we can sense strange presences everywhere. The ‘blood of Kadesh’ that we set up should be mixed in it, but if we are to try and approach it, we will again be affected by that interference

.

Everyone listened as they are looking at Misaki City, enveloped in Jizaishiki.

From the major roads to the shopping streets, from the commercial district to the front of the station, any place where it is obviously crowded has orderly and complicated patterns. However, the strange thing is.....

“It’s blank at the riverbank.....? Isn’t that the place where it should be the most crowded? Why are they completely alright?”

Once Yuji mentioned it, everyone turn to look at that area. Indeed, no Jizaishiki can be observed at the riverside. It is impossible to use crowd volume as a condition anymore.

“What’s that in the center?”

Shana noticed something located near the middle of the river, and asks.

Yuji saw it, and answers simply:

“It’s a small boat that’s firing fireworks.”

After answering, he turned his head around.

On the boat floating on the river (the ‘Haridan’ can even display it accurately), there is an extremely dense Jizaishiki. Needless to say, this has nothing to do with the crowd.

“Is this the source for the distortions of the fireworks?”

Tanaka remembered that peculiar sight, his tone seemingly indignant.

Khamsin supported his jaw with his hand, putting on an experienced look as he remarks:

“Ah ah, the moment we stopped controlling that self-activating Jizaishiki, this tightly compacted Jizaishiki immediately reacted, causing the distortions.

---

“Ho hum, now then, Sakai Yuji-kun, since we have confirmed the current situation, can you explain to us what you want the young lady to do?”

Yuji feels unhappy regarding the two tuners’ direct and aggressive approach in questioning others, they did not care that the girl is feeling down because of Hirai Yukari. However, he remembers that he was the one who gave the proposal that they were talking about. He secretly glanced at Yoshida, and she looked back at him, revealing a cheerful and spirited look

Time is indeed short. The professor has arrived at a nearby location.

Yuji finally lifted his heavy lips.

“.....Is there any problem, Yoshida-san?”

He deliberately tried to re-affirm it, and Yoshida firmly nods her head, albeit shaken.

"Yes, no problem."

(... ...)

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Shana saw him reveal a look of concern, not once did he do that to her (she thought).....

(.....Always shying away from me when we talk.)

Because this is how she feels, she could not help but think this way.

Yuji did not sense the movements of the other girl. Regarding Yoshida's participation, he could only allow the bare minimum. If possible however, he would not want to do this—after confirming, he then went on to the main topic.

“Actually, I only just came up with this idea when I learnt the tuning process, and wondered: can this be done? Will it be effective? I'm not sure, so do you still want to help?”

“Yes, now that we have come this far, please do not go on any further.”

Yoshida even reveals a gentle smile.

Yuji nodded his head hard, and says:

“I need Yoshida-san to again use your imagination to reconstruct the image needed for the tuning work.”

“Ah.....?”

Not only Yoshida, even the Flame Hazes present are shocked.

To them, the idea of tuning is to activate a Jizaishiki after acquiring an image (but every tuner’s methods are different). Finding the image that the assistant thought of is just one of the steps in getting everything the tuner needs. However, to ask Yoshida to help, this is the only thing that can be done.

“What is the point of doing this? Everything has already been distorted.”

Margery uses her basic knowledge to raise her questions.

Yuji nodded, and turns his thoughts into words:

“What is that called? I remember that.....duplicating memory image ‘Kadesh’—”

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Khamsin added on:

“Ah ah, it’s ‘ventricle’.”

“Yes, we’ll use that ‘ventricle’ to allow Yoshida-san, who has the original memory image to sense.....what is different in ‘this current Misaki City’.

“ .....

Even as one of the oldest Flame Haze, the ‘Gisō no Karite’ is also considerably surprised, and speechless.

That’s right. The original memory image has already been changed. The original owner is probably able to sense the differences and tell which areas have changed. Yuji feels that asking the human who has finished her task to provide more assistance than is required will burden her too much. So he tried to avoid that as much as possible. Now, that idea is simply a fantasy for him.

“As long as we know the areas that had been modified , we should be able to see the entire working behind it and the enemy’s motives.”

“Ah ah, I see.”

---

Khamsin replies, indicating that he understands Yuji's idea. It is a form of compliment, recognizing that Yuji is worthy of Shana's and Margery's praise.

"Ho hum.....it is certainly worth a try."

Behemoth, whose thoughts and ideas are the same as Khamsin, said. They view their mission as more than a habit, a lifestyle. Being caught unknowingly in his own monotonous way of thinking, both he and Behemoth are impressed by Yuji deep inside, as that boy managed to solve it.

Margery is impressed and satisfied that she did not misjudge him.

"Ho—hum, you're really something."

"Hehehe! This—time, we have to make the most of our opportunities, missy!"

"Urusai! Urusai! Urusai! If you have time to bother about this, hurry up and get to work!"

Shana blushes as she rebuts Marchosias. Of course, she is delighted that Yuji managed to prove his capabilities. It's just--- it's just that this is no longer a secret that belongs to her, making her feel lonely.

Agreeing with Shana's perfunctory rebuttal, Khamsin immediately turns to Yoshida:

"Ah ah, she's right, and there isn't much time left..... are you ready, young lady?"

"Yes."

Yoshida answers, looking at Yuji as she tries to borrow courage from him.

"Then it's up to you now."

And then he firmly says:

"Ah ah , then....."

Khamsin takes off the stick, which was slung on his shoulder and wrapped in cloth, and pulls out a metal bat. He then takes off his hood, revealing his entire face. A braid of hair is hanging on his back.

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Yuji, Satou and Tanaka are taken aback.

Including the long scar across his lips, that youthful face is scarred all over. The prideful and awe-inspiring brown pupils, together with his intact organs make him look even more pitiful.

“Ah ah, young lady, please stand away from here..... yes, right in the middle of the road. That will do.”

Yoshida followed his instruction and stood in the middle of the miniature road.

Khamsin stood in front of her in a slightly further away position.

In the night breeze on the rooftop, in a miniature landscape that shows torches and Jizaishiki, the boy, who has injuries all over his body, effortlessly raised the metal bar, which looks so thick and large that it does not seem that he is able to lift it.

In this extremely unnatural yes beautiful landscape, the teenager says:

“Okay, get ready to start.”

---

Like holding a baton, even though it is hard and heavy, he swung the bar down, cutting the air. Brown flames surround the thick and long bar.

(Yoshida-san!?)

Including Yuji, even Satou and Tanaka nearly shouted.

To them, the flames are moving around like bees, surrounding Yoshida, who looks like she finally aware. They then formed a vortex around her, engulfing her in it. Finally, the vortex becomes spherical, showing clearly her outline. The slow, rhythmic beating seems like—

“The heart.....WA!?” “---Um!?” “OwOw!”

Pa Pa Pa!

Blue flames appear in front of the eyes of Yuji, Satou and Tanaka, who were shouting when they saw what was in front.

“You three, if you dare to peep, you’re going to die a horrible death!”

“Hehehe! This is n—ot a threat to scare you oh!”

Hearing Margery and Marchosias say this, the three of them shut their eyes, and turn around.

Shana, who has intended to warn them, was grateful the 'Chōshi no Yomite', albeit with complicated feelings. Almost standing up just now, she then sat down.

Because as Yuji and the boys turn their backs around, within the beating of the 'Kadesh Ventricle', Yoshida Kazumi's naked body is floating within it.

Khamsin ignored the unnecessary commotion, and says to the girl in front of him calmly:

"Ah ah, then, girl, do you hear it?"

"Yes.....oh and, why do Sakai-kun and the other boys have to turn their backs around.....?"

Inside the ventricle, she is completely unaware that she is naked.

"Ho hum, no matter what, do not care about them. We're starting now, ready?"

"Yes."

Like the last time, Yoshida quietly close her eyes. She feel the flames around her becoming a small vortex, constantly coming together, forming a brown and starry sky.

“Ah ah, now we’re getting into the main part.....is it okay?”

“Yes.”

As she answers, she senses how the city looks like.

However, what she feels is strangely different from the one she saw in the blood of Kadesh. Like she is familiar with it, she could even tell from her memory which parts have been modified or have graffiti that disgust people.

She continues to concentrate on capturing the image. It’s like someone who is breaking down his own thoughts, causing the colours on the graffiti to change into a repaired picture.

She tries to express all these in words:

“How should I say this.....I feel that, when I turn around ‘there’.....how should I call it, feeling? Or heart? But I was changed by something into a different thing.”

---

Khamsin put his hand underneath his jaw again, and finally thought of something:

“Ah ah, so that’s it, like what Sakai Yuji-kun says.”

"Uh?"

"Yuji!"

"Yes!"

Khamsin was talking to Yuji, who was about to turn his head around before being stopped by Shana:

“Ah ah, what I mean is that, in this Jizaishiki that the ‘Seeking Researcher’ set up over the entire city, he used our power to activate it further, in order to make it more effective.”

Margery wonders as she frowns:

“Using that much power.....? Are you saying that the ‘Power of Existence’ and the Jizaishiki are separate?”

Although she’s a veteran Jizaihō specialist, having numerous years of experience—an Unrestraint Master, even she feels that the ‘Power of Existence’, the source of

power, and the Jizaishiki, which is able to signify the flow of the ‘Power of Existence’ and increase its effectiveness through a loop, are the same.

Actually, for a highly-skilled Unrestraint specialist like her, as they activate a Jizaihō, it is a motion ‘creating a Jizaishiki that triggers the occurrence’, ‘creating space for the Jizaishiki’, ‘creating a Jizaishiki that converts the ‘Power of Existence’, and ‘creating an activation command’ all at the same time. As they have repeated these highly difficult tasks for such a long time, they would get used and numb to it.

“Ah ah, this isn’t impossible.”

Regarding this, Khamsin and Behemoth have knowledge that far exceeds what Margery has, and have directly fought against the ‘Seeking Researcher’ and his assistant before. Once he hears any related topics, he is able to think of some things:

“He has interacted with humans for a long time, and once carried out his research on the Jizaishiki with humans in the middle ages. Because the Jizaishiki itself does not have any power, no one found out about it. Because including us, anyone related to the ‘Crimson

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Realm' have an advantage of using 'his own power' freely.

"Ho hum, until that genius 'Spiral organ' used several points and wrote a Jizaishiki which automatically absorbs the 'Power of Existence', it was worthless. Until now, no one will go and discover, let alone try and experiment to find the value of it anymore. Needlessly to say, 'Denizens' are selfish and will do whatever they want, whereas Flame Hazes will take revenge on anything that's in front of them."

Yuji and all the other outsiders were getting confused. Marchosias (because he heard the name of that creep) then explained to them in a slightly angry tone:

"The main—gist is, the Jizaishiki is the 'music score', and the Jizaihō is the 'song'. The Fūzetsu is somewhat of an exception, since everyone knows about it. Compared to singing from other people's music score, most people would chose a much simpler tune. My Margery Daw who has such a beautiful voice has been singing improvised songs, and never once will she read the score POOF!"

Margery smacked the ‘Grimoire’ once, and says out the main point:

“Thanks for the compliments. Anyway, to cut the long story short, that guy who started all these research on the Jizaishiki, ‘Seeking Researcher’ has already activated a Jizaishiki that causes our ‘Power of Existence’ to become his.....Now that I mention it.....”

Suddenly, she notices something:

“When we were affected by the interference when we were in front of the station, the ‘Rinne’ occupying the station did not seem to have used any ‘Power of Existence’. Like what Yuji said just now, the enemy only needs to activate the Jizaishiki. In actual fact, we are the ones powering it.”

From what the Unrestraint specialists are saying, Shana makes her own conclusion:

“So, the one guarding the station isn’t a ‘Denizen’, it’s just a ‘Rinne’, and yet it can set up such a large Jizaishiki. Then, what is that wave that causes people to calm down?”



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To this question, the two tuners have an answer:

“Ah ah, we know, it should be the side-effects of the tuning.”

“Ho hum, it means that even though the ‘Seeking Researcher’ and his group have taken control of it, but several unrelated Jizaishiki are still functioning. As it is originally a part of the repair mechanism, the wave that will calm people down will continue to be affected the distortions that cannot be corrected.”

It’s indeed a gathering of the experts. Yuji thought silently as he listened to them. He just provided a clue to them, and with just this clue, they were able to find the answer on their own.”

It’s almost time for the main part. Yuji asks Yoshida, his back still facing her.

“Yoshida-san, can you find where this ‘Seeking Researcher’s’ hid it?”

“O, okay.....”

Yoshida is wondering why he must turn his back around, as she tries to look for the source of that

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dissonance. When she sensed the location and knew how it looks like, she opened her eyes:

“Ah, I’m sorry, even though I know where it is, I don’t know how to explain this?”

“Ho hum.....how about this, shall we use the ‘Haridan’?”

“Ah ah, this can do.”

Khamsin agreed with Behemoth’s suggestion, and the metal rod in his hand slammed onto the mini-road with a ‘clunk’ sound, then.....

“I see it---!”

Shana widened her bright red eyes.

Alastor mutters:

“Hum, so it’s ‘here’?”

In the mini-model of the ‘Haridan’, something caused a chain reaction with Yoshida’s sense of dissonance, and began to emit a brown glow.

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Margery's glasses reveals—she asked Satou and Tanaka before, understanding that it is the mascot of the city, and would be there for the entire summer—the object that would be seen nowadays.

“Ha ha ha, so that's it.”

That is a small bird decoration hung above the street when the Misago Festival takes place.

“So the Jizaishiki is engraved on the top of this small bird model? Indeed, by taking advantage of festivities to carry out one's plans, no one will suspect anything.”

Marchosias feels that it is now ripe to start the battle, his voice full of enthusiasm.

Khamsin and Behemoth nod their heads, as if they finally understood everything.

“Ah ah, the reason why the small boat on the river is concentrated with such a large amount of Jizaishiki is because of this. Because the boat is decorated all over with them.”

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“Ho hum, those small birds that are imbued with Jizaishiki. Asking human suppliers to hand them around and hang them, such an action is enough to hold us down. All that’s left is to activate it, and that’s the entire process. As expected of the ‘Seeking Researcher’, well-versed and experienced in dealing with these situations.”

“But then.....”

Shana spoke up:

“How should we break this? Won’t the enemy interfere when they realize this?”

Everyone became silent.

The basic problem has not been solved.

Once they attack, any attack will be deflected.

“Maybe we can break one or two of them, but once the enemy realize it, he will step his guard up, and we’re stuck. The number of decorations in front of the station is also rather plentiful, and even if it isn’t so, the security is rather tight, it is impossible to get close.”

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--?"

Satou unexpectedly turn around on hearing what Shana said.

Alastor did not bother, and reminds everyone the need to take action:

"Hum, even if it is like this, there isn't much time left. The 'Seeking Researcher' will arrive soon. Although I don't know what he's up to, it's definitely to no good. We must stop him no matter what."

Margery, who prefers a tough and rough style of doing things, proposes:

"Why don't we blow the entire station up?"

"Once we use a large force, we would be found out immediately. Why not we try and think of a way to get close to the station, destroy all the bird decorations in one go, and rush into the station, where the enemy's command post is? What do you think?"

Yuji's well-thought out alternate proposal is rejected by Khamsin:

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“Ah ahe, this won’t do, the number of bird decorations in front of the station is too many. I feel that we should just destroy all the bird decorations at the outskirts of the city, and rush in. Then, we wipeout that ‘Seeking Researcher’ first, how about that?”

“If so, then we wouldn’t know what he has instructed the ‘Rinne’ to do beforehand. Worse, we may end up going in and be surrounded with no way out.”

Shana dismissed it, and everyone continue to think.

The ‘Seeking Researcher’ is now within a close proximity.

As the interfering Jizaihō is still present, once he gets into Misaki City, it would be impossible to stop him. Besides that, although they know he has an ace at his disposal, the problem is that this ace does not have any flaws. It is truly a desperate situation, like they are surrounded by walls on all directions.

“Ah, excuse me—”

At this moment.....

“May I say something please?”

The teenager was originally listening silently to these superhumans, his back facing Yoshida, as he nervously raises his hand.

Margery frowns as she asks:

“Keisaku, what’s the problem?”

Being asked, the boy—Satou Keisaku is somewhat hesitant, but managed to utter it out:

“I.....went into the station before.”

Satou and Tanaka held their breaths, as they travel through the alleys between the buildings in front of the station. Only rubbish bins, fire staircases and rubbish can be seen. And the drains stink.

Of course, it does not matter how careful they are, as everyone else cannot move, frozen in their own positions and seemingly lost in their own worlds. Once they reached the station, they will be exceptionally aware. However, the two continue to move through the alleys towards the station. Trying to think of ideas to conceal themselves is only a form of self-encouragement; but to

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these two who are risking their lives to explore, it is extremely important that they stay hidden.

“Didn’t expect to memorise all the routes to the station , guess this ability isn’t completely useless.”

Tanaka said with a wry smile.

In the past, he used this place as a fighting arena, and sometimes a convenient way of escape. Never has he ever thought that this will become the holy road that will help them save the entire city.

Beside him, Satou Keisaku, who often uses this road together with him, pulls a long face as he says:

“Why did you follow? Am I that unreliable?”

His tone underlines his displeasure. He intended to take on this dangerous mission on his own. As a hindrance, he wants to use this opportunity to redeem himself.

However, Tanaka requested to go along with him, seemingly forcing her to nod her head. That suicidal mindset that he once had is now gone. And not only that, he even looks rather carefree.

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“Simple, because two people are more reliable than one.”

“.....”

Satou, who is affected by an inferiority complex, even feels that this lame argument made sense. He could not argue, and can only remain silent.

Tanaka’s tiny eyes glanced at Satou’s expression, and then he proceed on.

This is the end of the alley. And from here, even though it has been attacked by ‘Denizens’, though it isn’t absorbed into the outer appearance of the station, one can see a chaotic and messy bicycle parking lot. This place has become an old, abandoned bicycle graveyard, most of them look like they have been abandoned for a long time. The roof of the parking lot extends from the building where they are close to the overhead bridge in front of the station, several meters long.

Tanaka places the bicycles blocking the alley to one side, making a ‘kacha kacha’ sound in the process, and

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glance at Satou, who's doing the same thing (and seeing him putting them carefully to avoid making any sound, and following suit), quietly asking:

“Oh yeah, I wanted to ask, why must you.....”

Satou pretended not to hear, and concentrated on clearing the bicycles.

Tanaka did not press on any further.

The two slowly and stealthily got to the top of the bicycle parking lot, and look around at the distorted Misaki City. They do not know how much the buildings have changed, and guessed that they may be watched, a sense of fear boiling within them.

“Don't worry, at that time, the 'Rinne' did not say that he will kill us immediately. It should be like what Margery nee-san says, the enemy is trying to achieve its objectives. As long as we can withstand the 'First Attack', it will be alright.”

Like reading a spell that disperses demons, Satou continues to repeat what Margery and the rest said before they left.

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Hearing some encouragement wouldn't hurt, Tanaka thought, and nods.

Getting past the narrow road under the bridge, and ensuring that they are well hidden, the several metres of adventure—a seemingly too fun-looking adventure on so many points of view, is just right in front of them.

“Just now.....”

Satou suddenly said.

“?”

“I'll tell you when we reach the opposite.”

Tanaka nods his head.

On the top of the old Yoda department store, Khamsin continues to maintain the 'Kadesh's Ventricle', while Yoshida continues to act as the sensor for dissonance.

Yuji carefully avoids looking at Yoshida, who is inside the Ventricle and is naked now. He stands on the top of the building in front of Misaki City station, and silently waits for the impending disturbance. Margery has

already got into position, waiting for the signal to launch the attack.

As she prepares for action, she talked to the old Flame Haze, whose height cannot even reach her chest.....

“After the first phase of battle, we must be extra careful. If we are affected by it, you will definitely be unable to complete it by yourself. Who asks your attacks to be so sloppy?”

She left these words.

Upon hearing, Khamsin replies:

“Ah ah, I will try and attack in close range.”

The tone implies that it seems to be directed back at her.

This youth that emits such a calm and steady presence, and is covered in scars; the power that he has is amazingly enough for the berserker ‘Chōshi no Yomite’ to warn him. This causes Yuji to be surprised.

(Oh yeah, Alastor seem to have mentioned it before. The tuner is able to live for so long because he naturally has a considerable amount of strength.)

Shana stood beside him.

“Ah.....Shana.”

The flame-haired girl with blazing eyes, dazzling, prideful and awe-inspiring, says rudely:

“Then, I’m leaving.”

“Um, I’ll leave mum to you.”

As he says, Yuji realizes that she is wearing a yukata underneath her black coat, and it’s a dark red one that matches her well.

Yuji thought: So she was at the festival today.

(--“If you want to go, go.”--)

But she obviously spoke to him ‘rather coldly’. So.....

(Ah! I understand it now!)

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She is now heading to her battle position, and on the way, placed his mum Chigusa in a safe place (If they win, and she sees this, it will be hard for them to explain it). It must be mum who pulled her along', Yuji thought. From their everyday conversation, his mum would definitely have prepared the yukata on her own, and force her to come along no matter what.

(Eh? But, if this is the case.....)

Why would Shana suddenly run away? And why would mum frantically go around looking for her?

Yuji did not know that everything was because of him. He could not come up with an explanation, and it is just a random thought, so he stopped thinking further into it.

Shana stopped for a while.....

“.....Ngh Ngh.”

She answers him, and stops, before pulling the distance between them.

“?Shana, what’s wrong with you?”

Yuji feels that her actions were strange, and could not help but ask.

From the back, Shana looks a bit delighted, but she only slightly turn her head around and spoke. She looks rather nervous, and says with determination and realization:

“Yuji.....aren’t you angry?”

(-----Angry? Me?)

Deep inside, Yuji is shocked.

He realizes, after meeting up with her, the distance between the two seems to have disappeared, like ice melting fast. From the girl’s facial expression, one can tell that she’s feeling insecure, seemingly waiting for an answer. Yuji realizes it, and couldn’t help but laugh:

“.....Oh, so that’s how it is.”

Hearing laughter, and because she ‘got laughed at’, Shana got angry and turn around:

“What, what’s so funny about that!?”

---

“So—sorry, but you’re mistaken. Because I also thought that.....you’re angry.”

Shana understood what he meant, closing her eyes to avoid giving away her expression, and after some hesitation, asks:

“.....You’re not angry at me?”

In order to get rid of her anxiety, Yuji nods his head firmly:

“Yes.”

Then, feeling shy, he casually scratches his head:

“I’m sorry for shouting at you just now. But, the reason why I did this.....you should understand it right?”

“Ah---”

“Shana should be able to understand her own error.”

His answer is based on his knowledge of her.

(Sure enough, Yuji.....)



Could understand and comprehend her lifestyle as a Flame Haze.

Shana's bright red eyes are sparkling in delight and joy . To hide her feelings, she violently nods her head before giving a belated answer:

"Um!"

Yuji then says, smiling:

"I'll leave mum to you then."

Shana nods her head again:

"Um."

Her face is bubbling with happiness.

However.....

As she turns around, there are two sorts of feelings occurring. The delight she has a while ago is still strong, but there's still a different feeling inside her.

(.....Why?)

She could understand what that feeling is.

But she does not know why it's here.

She's obviously happy, her chest still feels warm now.

But there is still anxiety and loneliness.

(Why would I feel like this.....?!)

Satou and Tanaka are panting, even after walking for several meters.

The two deeply understand that the mental fatigue will affect them physically.

However, all their hard work is worth it.

At least to the two of them.

"Great, nothing happened in this clear area underneath the viaduct."

Tanaka is looking at the wide area underneath the viaduct, on the other side of these thick rows of concrete piers.

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Underneath the viaduct, where they are now, there are a barbed wire fences surrounding all the piers, which extends all the way to the train station on the ground. As long as they advance forward through this open patch, they should be able to reach their destination quickly. Looking on, they cannot find any pipes or wires that the 'Denizens' used to surround the station.

Tanaka believes that they can make it, and looks at Satou, who is climbing past the wire fence.

"Whoosh!"

Satou jumped down halfway through, and now the two are separated by the barbed wire fence.

"Okay, now's my turn."

He says as he climbs the fence.

"No, no need for that."

Satou says from the other side of the fence.

".....Ah?"

Tanaka looks at his friend's expression.

"I'll finish the rest on my own, you can head back now ."

"What are you---"

"ACTUALLY!"

Satou suddenly shouted, interrupting Tanaka. AS if he 's regretting in front of his good friend, who is stunned and rooted to the spot, he continues on, placing his forehead on the wire fence:

"I've admired you for a very long time."

"What are you talk---"

"LISTEN TO ME!"

With that bitter tone, Satou shook the metal fence.

"Until now, we've been training in order to get stronger. Although I make mistakes all the time, you didn't blame me. In trying to lift the 'Blutsauger', I could only pull it up slightly, and yet you can lift it up. It's the same today. You followed Margery nee-san's orders faithfully, and yet I sneakily went to get that sword!"

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Hearing this shouting, Tanaka's squinting eyes are now open and fixated on him. The excited Satou did not seem to realize this.

"Even though we aren't as strong as Margery nee-san, but we're all normal human beings living in a normal environment, and I can't help but admit you're still a lot better than me! You understand my feelings now? I'm really worried! Isn't this normal? Because I know that I'm weaker, so I'm doing this!!"

Satou continues to rant on, and finally, Tanaka replies:

"So is this your answer?"

From Tanaka's tone, Satou could sense danger and fear that he has not sensed for a long time. Suddenly, from across the barbed wire, he was punched on the face. The impact was enough to cause a depression on the wire fence, causing Satou to fall onto the ground, almost fainting.



“You think that as we’re separated by this barbed wire fence, I can’t hit you? Be careful that I might even bend it!”

Several seconds after pulling away his bleeding fist, Tanaka bent the barbed wire fence back. Then he grabs onto it and climbs up.

“Ta.....naka.....stop.....”

Satou continues to groan on the ground, while Tanaka continues to climb, saying:

“Let me tell you! Ogata-chan just confessed to me!”

“.....?”

Satou did not know what he was talking about, remaining silent and gently rubbing his red, swollen face.

“After the positions have been messed up, the moment after nee-san ordered us. I sent Ogata-chan home, and heard her confess to me. Doing things half-heartedly, not what a follower should do. Not being serious.....no, one has never been such an unserious follower like me.”

---

---

Tanaka quickly reached the top of the wire fence, and without hesitation, got past it.

“Just now, you mentioned something about to blame or not to blame. Either way, I’m just an ordinary person who just happens to have strength. I’m even clear that I ain’t the model student or top student that you think of.”

Ignoring the groaning that stopped, Tanaka climbs down, his back facing Satou, and says:

“Actually, I feel that you’re a lot better than I am.”

“Hm?”

Tanaka went in front of Satou, who could barely get up.

“Whatever I can’t do, you can do so well. Like for example, you can talk with girls so easily, get along with everyone so well, and can even naturally start up a conversation regarding anything around us. I feel that you can do anything. It’s the same today.....even if it were me, I wouldn’t have even dared to go to a place where there might be ‘Denizens’ lurking about, let alone bringing a sword after being chased off, this sort of thing, even if I want to do it.....here!”

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He stretched his hand, bloodied and greasy from punching the barbed wire fence, out to his friend on the ground. Satou feels that he hasn't seen this scene for a very long time, as he naturally grabs onto Tanaka's hand. He is then pulled up with astounding strength.

"Really, the person who I really admire is now saying that he is inferior. I don't like this."

He rattles on as he quickly moves onwards to the station.

Seeing Tanaka trying to hide his embarrassment, Satou's face softened a bit as he continues to stroke it. Heading on, he then mutters:

"If we're the same, then did I get punched for nothing?"

"Who ask you to talk nonsense? You're basically begging for a beating."

Satou regains his normal composure, and talks to the figure who replies him coldly:

".....Oh yeah, how did Ogata-chan confess to you?"

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“No time for that, let’s move!”

“AH! Wait a minute! Just tell me, will ya!”

The two quickly sprinted towards the station, seemingly forgetting what kind of place they are heading towards.

At a cross-junction somewhere, a beautiful lady clad in yukata is hugging her breasts with her two hands and standing cross-legged on top of a lamppost.

This beauty—Margery Daw twitched her beautiful eyebrows.

“.....Success.”

“Splendid! Done to perfection!”

Underneath her right armpit, the frivolous laughter of the ‘Grimoire’ can be heard.

“Stupid Marcho, how can we be satisfied with just this only? However.....if we can remain alive and get this great credit, we can think about it.”

---

“He---hehehe! We’ll say it when the time arrives. Very good—very good--! Then.....”

“Let’s move!”

Deep blue flames appear underneath Margery’s feet, which shot upwards.

Her power kept continues to surge out, entering and covering her body. It then begins to accumulate, as her appearance changes. Several seconds later, at that place, she changes into a beast.

Like a pillow that is round and fat when set upright, it has pointy ears, a black nose, jagged, razor sharp teeth that are neatly arranged, and a huge crescent smile. This is the flame clothing ‘Toga’ that covers the entire body of the Flame Haze ‘Chōshi no Yomite’ Margery Daw and ‘Jūrin no Sōga’ Marchosias.

Her arms, hanging on the side of her short and fat body and several times heavier than a giant bear, spread out like wings:

“We really haven’t been destroying things so badly and excessively!”

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“O——K——O——K—— Full speed ahead!”

“Bam”, because of the sudden shock caused by the jumping and spurting of the flames, the lamppost got trampled badly.

The flaming beast heads towards the ominous and mysterious Misaki City station on the opposite side of the main road.

“Aiya---? Haven’t you learnt your lesson?”

Domino is in the centre of the Jizaishiki, having finished about 90% of the work and is now finishing up the last parts left and waiting for the professor, as he twists his head, now supported only by wires.

“Really--! Why did they come here for? Why can’t they just wait and get killed?”

While saying some irrational things, it gently swings the arms that are growing from the ground. Like just now, it is activating the interfering Jizaihō to counter the attacking Flame Hazes, causing them to lose control of their direction and resulting in embarrassing collisions---

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“Strange!?”

It’s showing deep blue flames coming straight in.....

It is not affected by the interference, just heading straight in.....

It is heading towards the middle of the tightly shut doors, where the two attendants have placed two strips on them as a directional marker.

It bursts into the middle of the station.

“WHAT!?”

The deep blue flames burst into the first floor of the central station hall.

Which is right underneath Domino.

Somewhere slightly far away from the station, behind the guardrails.....

“”Success!!””

Satou and Tanaka unanimously shout out, and proceed to put their hands on their head, ducking for cover.

“WA—HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA! Let the killing begin! Devour them all!”

“Kill them all Kill them all Kill them all Kill them all Kill them all! ‘Crimson Denizens’-----!!”

The maniacal laughter rocked the train station.

At the same time, unaffected by direction or interference, the Jizaihō that destroys everything within an area explodes from within the station.”

“Uwa!”

“Alright! Let’s run Tanaka!”

At least the two followers are following their big sister’s orders and retreating.

Satou’s swollen face begins to show a smile of satisfaction and realization.

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“Ah Ah! Oh man! This is so cool!!”

Tanaka, who is running alongside him, has a similar facial expression:

“Ya, super duper awesome!”

The two boys ran away from the flaming train station, which is still exploding.

Shana sat beside Chigusa on a bench near the riverbank, and waits. Her flaming bright red eyes have become black, there is no black coat on her, and she does not have a samurai sword with her. Now clad in yukata and with her hair down, she silently waits.

At the riverbank, she can still hear music. She relaxes in the cooling summer night breeze. After a while.....

“Shana.”

Alastor spoke.

“Ngh.”

Shana simply replied as she stands up.

---

She can feel the explosions and power from afar.

The battle has started.

“I’m leaving, Chigusa-san.”

She reveals a lonely smile as she leaves.....

(If Chigusa-san wakes up, will she tell me what’s this feeling I felt just now and now.....?)

As she thought, she looked at herself.

It’s rare for her to borrow a yukata from Chigusa (Shana did not dare think that Chigusa gave it to her). Now after running around, it got dirty, and untidy.

“I’m sorry, it may get even dirtier.”

As she says, the Flame Haze quickly puts on her black coat.

Her right hand is placed on the left side of her hip, as she pulls out the samurai sword ‘Nietono no Shana’.

Her bright red eyes were already dazzling.

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“I’m leaving.”

As wings sprouted on her back, leaving behind a trail of firedust flight path, the girl leaves for the battlefield.

“Alright, we’re unstoppable now!”

Yuji shouted in joy.

The ‘harridan’ shows that the small bird decorations with Jizaishiki in them have all been destroyed. Although it didn’t show it, it is definite that Shana did this (For some reasons, the ‘haridan’ is unable to show which side the Flame Hazes are on). From the astounding rate that they are destroyed, one can easily think of the bright red flight pattern as she flies.

From the riverbank at Misaki Bridge, she flew towards the big road in front of the station, destroying decorations on her way.

After clearing this area, she then changed directions, heading down the railway tracks while continuing to destroy the decorations. Her objective is to destroy the ‘Seeking Researcher’ Dantalion, who’s now coming from afar.

---

Margery's first wave of attacks caused Domino, who's in charge of giving orders, to be confused. So now, there is nothing to prevent Shana from removing those decorations.

"----Ah!"

One can see it from the top of Yoda shopping centre.

The bright red glow weaves through one building after another, flying past the major roads, while releasing flames to destroy these bird decorations. That is the 'Enpatsu Shakugan no Uchite' flying about.

Yuji is mesmerized as he watches the girl's movements .

Very quickly, she reached the public square in front of the station.

He can sense the girl as if she were right in front of him.

At the square, she quickly stops above the bus stop. Gathering energy, remembering where all the other decorations in the area are, she turns this enhanced energy into a fireball, and releases it.

“Too cool!!”

Just like how he sensed, all the Jizaishiki in front of the station were destroyed.

(.....Sakai-kun.....)

From his expression as he watches the battle, Yoshida, who is inside the ‘Kadesh ventricle’ and is feeling the same thing as Yuji, has a slightly hazy expression on her face. He is right in front of her now, and yet she cannot get close to him. Even when she knew that she is now in a paranormal situation, this trivial idea still clings on in her heart.

“Ah ah, missy, you okay?”

“Eh?”

Turning around, she sees Khamsin looking at her.

---

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“Ho hum, now that we have removed most of the interfering Jizaishiki, and the time is almost right, can you see what they are doing inside the train station? And what is their objective?”

“So...sorry, I'll get to it straight away!”

Inside the ventricle, Yoshida begins to concentrate.

Following their instructions, she again carefully looks at her ideal scene, which is the original look that Misaki City should have.

(How does Misaki City Station..... look like?)

Using her memory on the station, she continues to search within it.

At this moment.....

(----Wha-, what is this-----?)

A chilly, awful feeling passes through her floating body, and she unconsciously held her shoulders even more tightly.

(So disgusting.....? No, it's scary.....!)

---

It's not just the dissonance. Hidden within it is something similar to the Blood of Kadesh used for tuning , but the use of it is completely different.

A Jizaishikii that can increase the rate of distortion within the current Misaki city.

Once activated, Misaki City will be swallowed up by the distortion, and gone---

“-----!!”

Yoshida feels the flow of that power, and screams.

“Ah ah, young lady!?”

“Khamsin Nbh'w! Look closely!”

Being reminded by Behemoth, Khamsin immediately turns towards the model that displays Misaki City station ‘according to what Yoshida feels’. He is surprised and frightened, as he understood from one look what the thing being displayed is.

“Reverse seal! It's incomplete.....no, I understand, that bastard ‘Seeking Researcher’! What the hell is he up to now?”

“Ho hum! That guy actually wants to achieve ‘that objective’. It’s absolutely foolish!”

“Wha-, what’s going on!? Yoshida-san!?”

Being surprised, Yuji ran over.

“Ah ah, don’t worry, she’s just a bit shocked, she’ll be awake soon.”

Khamsin swings the metal rod in his hands, removing the ‘Kadesh’s ventricle’. He gently supported the weak girl with his hands, and hands her to Yuji.

Yuji seems to have trouble adjusting his center of gravity as he receives her, and asks:

“Wha-.....what’s going on? What’s that Jizaishiki?”

“Ho hum, we have expected that he would do something extra-ordinary, but this is really an eye-opener for me.”

“Ah ah, that Jizaishiki set up at the train station is able to change a Jizaihō such that it functions exactly the opposite of what it should be doing. It’s considered a

reverse seal, and is normally used as a defensive formation against attacks. It's just that.....we didn't expect them to activate it on a large scale, and to counter the tuning.....!!"

"The complete opposite.....of tuning?"

After a while, Yuji realizes it, a streak of terror born within him.

"Ah ah, it means that the objective of the 'Seeking Researcher' is to 'maximise the distortions'. It can be said to be 'a destruction of existence' far beyond the city itself. Although the Jizaishiki within the station isn't complete, but the last part of it is from where the rails are coming from.....in other words, the mechanism will be activated when the 'Seeking Researcher' arrives."

"Ho hum, the interfering Jizaihō is originally used to mask this. If there was any single trace of setting up this Jizaihō, we would not hesitate, regardless of the damage or sacrifice needed, to destroy everything. Not allowing us to sense it until the last moment, finish the last parts and activate it at one go..... this is his plan."

Yuji tries to quickly digest their explanation, startled as he gradually understands what they are saying.

“Total destruction!? If so, wouldn’t Misaki City disappear!?”

“Ah ah, you’re absolutely right. It’ll disappear from this world together with everyone’s existence.”

“Ho hum, if this succeeds, the impact that it’ll have on this world is hard to imagine.....ho hum, so that’s it, ‘that’s why they’re carrying out the experiment’?”

Even though he’s shocked, Yuji still retains a glimmer of hope, and tries to deny it by logic:

“Wait a minute! If even he will be destroyed when he reaches here, wouldn’t the one who set up this be affected? Isn’t this strange!?”

Unfortunately, this argument is rejected on the spot.

“Ah ah, that’s true, but.....”

“Ho hum, that guy himself is always unpredictable.”

By now, no one can say anything.

---



Khamsin uses the strip Margery gave him, and contacts Shana:

“Ah ah, do you hear me? ‘Enpatsu Shakugan no Uchite’ and ‘Tenjō no Gōka’, we have understood the real objective of the ‘Seeking Researcher’. He intends to activate a reverse seal when he arrives.”

“What!?”

“This is madness.....No, he's already mad, um.”

“With the destruction of the Jizaishiki, the enemy can no longer prevent us from attacking. I’m joining you guys to destroy the station, please finish the job before the ‘Seeking Researcher’ arrives.”

“Got it!”

“Um.”

The reason why he didn’t say ‘exterminate’, is because that self-proclaimed ‘Professor’ does not discern between friend or foe as he carries out his experiments. Against so many enemies, he is especially adept at getting away.

“Ah ah, Sakai Yuji-kun, I’ll leave the young lady to you.”

“You, you’re going to battle as well?”

Even though he can easily wield the metal rod, and there are visible scars all over his body, Khamsin still looks like a youth even younger than Shana.

What kind of battle prowess does he have, that even ‘that’ Margery will fear? Yuji wonders.

Then again, the Flame Hazes themselves are rather inexplicable.

Yuji quickly sees his combat prowess through his own eyes.

“Ah ah, luckily most of the buildings are abandoned.”

“Ho hum, very good.”

Khamsin nimbly jumps onto the railings on the top of the building.

The heaviness of the rod on his shoulder made a ‘pata’ sound, and deforms from the bottom.

“Ah ah, oh yeah, almost forgot.”

While saying, he pulls out the strip again.

“Ah ah, ‘Chōshi no Yomite’, do you hear me? Once the ‘Seeking Researcher’ arrives at the station, the Jizaishiki there will activate a reverse tuning seal, so we’re joining in the fray to destroy this Jizaishiki. Please take care.”

“Uhm, wait a minute!”

“Are you two crazy? We haven’t finished clearing the inside-----”

Ignoring the panicky responses of the two, Khamsin cut the communication. He immediately bends his knees before jumping forward.

“Ah!?”

Under Yuji’s watchful eyes, he crashed heavily into the building opposite them. Because the rod was pointed in front, not only the windows, even the walls were crushed

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. He then jumped inside. This is an empty room that the duo just noticed in the abandoned building, no humans in sight.

“Ah ah, now then, let’s get started.”

“Ho hum.”

Raising the rod like a baton, they destroyed the pillars, not like it matters to them anyway.

“Gisō!”

“Blood of Kadesh, set!”

Following Khamsin’s and Behemoth’s short conversation, a ‘bam bam bam’ sound can be heard. Several Jizaishiki are displayed on the walls, the ceiling and the floor. This is the exact same set-up used on the floor in the beginning, when he was walking on the streets with Yoshida.

“Activate!”

Khamsin spoke again, his entire body being covered in flames. That is the ‘Kadesh ventricle’. He is floating inside as he points forward with his metal rod:

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“Creating Jizaishiki, Kadesh’s pulse!”

Behemoth spoke out, and numerous flames looking like ropes and snakes are splashing out from the several Jizaishiki surrounding them. These flames are flickering, but like a jet spray hitting hard, they cause cracks to form on the cheap concrete walls.

Khamsin naturally does not mind as he says:

“Start!”

The swaying flame serpents begin to combine, intertwining with each other. It slowly gathers and form several strings of flames

“Simultaneously, lock the Jizaishiki and blood of Kadesh together!”

Following Behemoth’s directions, the several flame strings combine together with the ‘Kadesh ventricle’.

Unexpectedly.....

Unable to withstand the increasing pressure, the concrete crumbles, spreading to the outside.

---

“Wha--, what’s going on?”

Surprised, Yuji glanced over there.

Opposite the road---- the building where Khamsin jumped into, cracks begin to form from within, stirring up dust clouds, some of it coming at them.

“Woah, poof!?”

Yuji bends down, protecting the unconscious Yoshida.

Finally, the rumbling gradually died down, the dust clouds becoming thinner.

“Ahem ahem! What in the world just happened, Kham  
-----”

Speaking halfway, Yuji became speechless, his head tilting upwards.

Within the dust, there is a shadow.

A shadow completely different from the building.

That black shadow made the night scenery look bright.

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“Ah, ah ah-----”

Above the opposite building, there is a giant.

Now without any interference, Shana opens her wings, and flies towards the viaduct, where previously there is interference.

Sure enough, there is a dangerous presence, one that makes people uneasy, approaching down the tracks.

“Alastor, will it be effective?”

“We’ll know when we try.”

“Ngh.”

After nodding her head, the ‘Enpatsu Shakugan no Uchite’ heads onto the tracks, where the presence is fast approaching, her black coat and yukata flying together in the air like two layers of cloaks. She chose to follow the track leading to Misaki City station.

Although they’re only rumours, Shana feels that that person will make a particularly big fuss over a minor detail. Finally.....

---

Pch-Choo-----!

The strange-sounding whistle came from afar.

On the other side of the track, within the darkness, in this seemingly lonely scene, Shana proceeds forward as her wings burn, her flaming eyes meeting the lights.

“It’s coming, it’s the train alright.”

“The hōgu that the enemy uses will be named ‘Self-crystallisation’ and have some unique and strange abilities, we must be careful.”

“Um.”

Shana and Alastor exchanged a short conversation.

In order to fulfill the mission of a Flame Haze.

She has to destroy this ‘Crimson Denizen’ who’s damaging this world.

Everything’s the same.

Becoming one with her existence, continuing to do her duty.

---



In behavior and reality, nothing changed.

Right now however, there's some things tied together to her past, and her future.

She can sense it.

She's now here because of the discussion with Yuji and the rest just now.

When everything's over, she'll be with Chigusa and everyone else to welcome the next day.

She never ever thought about her past or her future. She used to think there's no need for it.

Yuji looks up, seeing a massive and overwhelming object in front of him, a towering giant of rubble. Brown flames covers it entire body, proving that this giant is Khamsin.

“This is the..... ‘Gisō no Karite’ .....”

Looking closely at it, this giant body is now made up of parts from the entire top half of the building. If he were to participate in the battle like this, who knows how much destruction will he cause.

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However, Khamsin's method of combat is completely different from what Yuji expects.

The huge giant of debris moves his right arm heavily yet fluidly, his palm reaching somewhere near his heart. Khamsin then pulls the rod he normally uses from, like someone pulling a stake from a vampire, and wields it. In the hands of this giant, the thick and long rod looks like a pencil. This made Yuji feel that, although the weapon is large, it feels a bit shabby.

If Yoshida Kazumi is to wake up at this point, she should be able to sense it.

What does Khamsin call this rod?

From within the giant's body, the young boy's voice came out:

"Ah ah, Sakai Yuji-kun, I'm going to use the 'Meakesuto', please hide and take cover."

"Ah, okay.....hai!"

Yuji answers, although it's unknown if Khamsin can hear him. He then brought Yoshida near the edge of the

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wall on the roof. Yoshida's face subconsciously faces the front, so he shifted her body away.

Next, when he looks up, something unbelievable is happening in front of him.

In the night, that giant of debris standing on the top of the tower is holding a whip.

More accurately, it's made of the rod 'Mekesuto' as the handle, and attached to it is rubble covered by brown flames, held together like a chain, flapping up and down. The rod, seemingly disproportionate with respect to the boy's height, seems now to be of the perfect size as the handle for the giant's whip.

The giant effortlessly swings the whip made up of several tons of rubble with just his right hand alone. The roar of the gust was very frightening, as Khamsin uses all of his arm's strength to throw the rubble in front of him in one go.

The concrete block tossed into the sky start to spurt brown flames at the maximum height. It then came down hard like a meteor.

---

After several seconds, the aftershocks, like something is sinking before floating up, and the enormous boom sound heads towards Yuji. His entire body shivers.....

(To.....to think there would be a Flame Haze like this! !)

Being shocked, he was screaming inside.

(It's no wonder that those two battle crazy people are scared of him.....now that I think of it, is it really possible to hit the target!?)

However, while ducking, he tries not to get too close to Yoshida's face.

Luckily, the first piece of rubble lands on the station.

Unfortunately, the aim was slightly off, Khamsin missed the Jizaishiki; he hit the railway viaduct instead. More importantly, the professor is coming in from the other side.

“He--, he’s really firing them!”

---

“Of course he’s not kidding! You know he isn’t when you see that face!”

Margery and Marchosias, who were showing their stuff within the station, panicked. Without a word, they quickly flew out from the station, which they have worked so hard just to get inside. Of course, they did not forget to deliver an extra large fireball as a parting gift.

“YOU—DARE—TO—DO—THIS!!”

The entire station radiates a pale green light, representing Domino’s anger.

On seeing this, Margery roars at the culprit through the communicating **Jizaihō**:

“Hey! Old geezer! You missed! This only made the enemy even angrier! What’s the point of it anyway?”

“Ah ah, I’m sorry. However, I did remember to warn you guys that I’ll be trying my best.”

“You—two are really careless—le! Hurry up, get down here and throw the rocks!”

“Ho hum, we’ll be there after firing a few more shots.”

The two shivered, and look up. The second concrete slab is already emitting brown flames, and falling down.

It is a good shot this time, hitting the front of the station, right in the middle of the 'Misaki City station' signboard.

However, the angle is too low, hitting only the station lobby which Margery already destroyed.

The two who left the station are sent flying from the explosion.

“WA---!?”

“Woah--!?”

Inside the control cabin of the 'Torch of the Night Party', which is fast approaching its destination.

“Professor---- the 'Chōshi no Yomite' and 'Gisō no Karite' have arrived--- hurry up!”

Although Domino looks like he's preparing to retaliate , deep down, he's crying to the professor:

“If we are to be hit directly by the ‘Gravel of Ra’, even if it’s me, we can’t hold out for long-----!!”

“Do---mino-----!! Why are you saying-----such disheartening things? And---you call yourself my assist---ant!?”

“No matter how strong an assistant is, things that it’s scared of are still scary (It hurts! It’s scary! It hurts! It’s scary!)”

The professor did not say anything, and while using the Self-crystallization of outstanding No. 7931—‘Calling of the messenger’ to pinch his spineless assistant, while running his train of thoughts at full speed, coming up with a conclusion half a second later:

“Act---ivate close ranged jizai--hō for all remaining ‘Self-crystallization of outstanding No.29147—the confused bird’ ex--cept for the jizai--shiki that prevents tuning!!”

“Wha--! But if we are to do this, we cannot hasten the activation of the reverse seal, and the effectiveness will be down by a third (it hurts! It hurts!)”

“I—know that without you—telling me!! Anyway, even though we narrow down our scope, the suc—cess of the ex—periment is, OUR, MAIN, PRIORITY!! Hm?”

He stopped moving his fingers, which have the habit of twisting things severely.

“(Professor)—”

“Stop—crying! I’ll pinch—you a few more times if—you cry anymore! So—it, seems, that they are here----?”

Just as the professor said, there is a bright spot on the screen in front of him.

Pulling down the periscope from the extremely low ceiling in the cabin, and again..... this time because of the ‘experiment’s results’ before, he places his glasses on his forehead before looking into the periscope.

A proud and stern, wide-eyed and angry looking girl is heading towards them, her flaming hair, bright eyes and bright red wings displaying all their glory.



“Um-----Hm----! So it is the ‘Enpatsu Shakugan no Uchite’--! That—dumb block has—changed a contractor, oh my oh my! Must be some incident that caused her to shrink in size eh?”

The ‘Crimson Lord’, who only believes in using various methods to experiment on things that the naked eye can see, finally releases Domino’s cheeks:

“---You must follow my instructions, is that clear? Do—mino---!”

“Under—stood, professor. But, please hurry up and get here(it really hurts!)---!”

The professor twists his dejected assistant, and raised the periscope.”

“Hn---hmhmhm, hmhm-----hohohohoho!  
Seems—like—there’s no time to invent a super slippery banana peel.”

Then, he says something strange as he approaches the enemy:

“Aiya, glasses, where’s my glasses.”

---

He is now ransacking everywhere for the item which he has pushed onto his forehead a while ago.

Shana is now meeting the strange train head on.

“.....”

Looking down, she faces the timber railway sleeps, and closes her eyes. Her forehead rests on the back of the blade of the ‘Nietono no Shana’, the tip of the blade facing forward, as she gradually gathers enough power to create a flame.

As both of them are moving at breakneck speed, in the blink of an eye, the distance between them shortened.

The weird-shaped front of the train is quickly closing in like a bullet. Shana uses this time to aim for the most effective opportune, and opens her eyes.

The ‘Nietono no Shana’ in front of her is now flaming.

“Burn!!”

Shana shouted, holding the ‘Nietono no Shana’ as her medium, a samurai sword covered in flames. She slightly

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deviates off the track, and hacks the train when they meet. Unexpectedly.....

“Ah?”

“Ugh!”

Alastor crooned as well.

Shana makes a u-turn, being the pursuer this time. Her bright red eyes captures the ‘Torch of the Night Party’, which is ‘only approximately half’ unscathed.

As the front of the train is shaped like a battering ram, the flames on the samurai sword seem to be dispersed. It may also seem to be the effect of the strong, pale green Jizaishiki on the train. However, the back parts of the train seems to be made of exposed, normal mechanical parts, as they have been burnt black and eroded by the remaining flames.

“Why—must you do—something so D----angerous-----!?”

A deafening roar suddenly came from the loudspeaker , followed by a ‘kachak’ disconnecting sound.

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“.....?”

Shana reveals a puzzled look, as the ‘Torch of the Night Party’ in front of her starts up. The machine packed inside, which seems like the controls for the platform, and the professor rises up.

“.....It’s dangerous outside, why did he still come out?”

“Don’t ask why, this guy does not play orthodox moves.”

The driver in front of the two stunned people---- the ancient ‘Crimson Lord’, ‘Seeking Researcher’ Dantalion slaps his forehead.....And finds his glasses on it.

After hastily putting them on.....

“Now—I’m a hundred times more courageous, and have ten times the vision! Hm-----? Hmhmhmhm-----?”

Bending down ninety degrees, he thought of what he is going to say. After several seconds, he makes an ‘oh oh’ sound, slams his right fist on his left palm, and rudely points at the girl chasing the ‘Torch of the Night Party’:

---

“Look—at what you done----!? You didn’t hit the front, and yet you burn--t the back!!”

“ .....

Shana forcefully presses the handle of the ‘Nietono no Shana’ towards her left abdomen, the tip pointing to the front, as she gets ready to strike.

“Talking—about all these, this ‘Torch of the Night party’ is the final—stage of the acti--vation of the reverse seal, it’s rather delicate.....”

Shana did not bother to listen, as she speeds up and charge forward.

The ‘Crimson Lord’ did not activate a Jizaihō, however  
.....

Somewhere from the ‘Torch of the Night Party’, a large hammer comes out to attack Shana.

“Ah—ngh! Ugh!”

Shana lost her balance in mid-air, and nearly crashes into the utility poles beside the track.

---

She readjusts her posture, and prepares to launch another attack. Alastor lashes out at her:

“Didn’t I tell you to be on your guard?”

“Sor--, sorry.”

“Everyone has been fooled by that guy’s appearance and mannerisms. Actually, his inner appearance is the same as the outer one. But this ‘Lord’ is still formidable in this world with just the unpredictability factor alone. I’ll stress again: Be on your guard!”

“Ngh.”

At this moment, the professor is heading towards where they are—he’s now moving in the opposite direction of where he’s facing. He swaggers and bends his back backwards and stamps on the metal floor to create a loud ‘clank’ sound. He maintains this posture for a while before doing it again. This time, a messy contraption with a large number of handles, pedals and levers appear around him.

“Hm---- hhmhmhm,hm ----hohoho! This--- is perfect! Let’s waste some time before we arrive at the station!”

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The ‘Enpatsu Shakugan no Uchite’ has never thought too much over eliminating a target, but when confronting the professor, a fleeting thought subconsciously strikes her—that is ‘I hope that I won’t get the feeling that there will be any implications’.

In the corner of her blazing eyes, somewhere not very far away, the fire sparks from the ‘Gravel of Ra’ thrown by the ‘Gisō no Karite’ quickly passes by her.

The rubble covered with brown flames, ‘Gravel of Ra’, lands in a corner of the station.

Margery is sitting on the top of the tower in front of the station, revealing her face from the Toca to see this wanton destruction. Putting on a cute, like a doll, and comical look, she says:

“We’re really no match for him.”

“Of course—I have this feeling that our mission is just the small bit right at the beginning, we just have to endure it this time.....?”

Marchosias spoke halfway before suddenly realizing something.

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Domino, who hasn't made a move up till now, is now firing 'Power of Existence' everywhere from the station.

For a short while, the duo did not realize what was going on, before quickly realizing the intentions behind it

“Oh no! He's trying to reclaim the undamaged parts! We must destroy them before they gather!”

“Deary—me, can't this world allow people to endure for a while? He, hehe!”

The Toca jumps from the tower into the sky.

“Hey! Old geezer! You saw that, didn't you! Hurry up and meet up with us! Use force to force the enemy to obediently surrender!!”

“Ah aha, I got it, I'll be there.”

A bam sound, together with the wind generated from the objects flying around, spreads everywhere, as a giant-whip wielding giant silhouette appears in the night sky. Very quickly, this silhouette lands on one of the towers built close to each other. As it is not an



abandoned building, the giant releases brown flames from his feet to avoid damaging the roof.

This is a Jizaihō that forces a soft landing for such a large weight and firmly supports that giant body which would definitely not be able to stand straight.

After several seconds, the 'Gisō no Karite' once again leaps of one foot.

On the other side of this silhouette in mid-air, there are several hundred more shadows. Not only that, they surround Misaki City station in all directions, and are gradually closing in.

These are the large number of bird decorations that are only slightly damaged and left on the streets. These birds have something like a featherworm (parasitic worms that lives on the birds' bodies) wrapping them up. More accurately, they surround Misaki City station, and are getting closer and closer.

Seems like the objective of the enemy is to gather these bird decorations, and use the interfering Jizaihō to protect the station.

As they have to control such a large number of them, temporarily, they cannot continue with the interference. But if Domino is to gather a large number of them nearby, that impenetrable interference will occur again.

When that happens, they have no choice but to surrender.

Even if it is only a thin line, they cannot step past it.

“I—should have known that we shouldn’t have shown any mercy.”

“Now we know the importance of destroying everything.”

Sighing, the ‘Chōshi no Yomite’ and ‘Jūrin no Sōga’ first fire a extra-large fireball to the group in front of them.

Choo----! A whistle in the night sky.....the professor—who’s about to bring Misaki City to its destruction by activating the reverse seal, is arriving.

---

Along with the whistle, Khamsein's large body continues to move towards the station.

Seeing him leave, Yuji, who was lying down a while ago, finally prepares to get up.

"Danger!"

Yoshida, who woke up since who knows when, pulls Yuji towards herself as she shouts, causing him to get down. The two end up stacked on each other, with Yuji on top and Yoshida below.

Yuji did not know what to do. This position looks like Yuji is the one who tripped her instead. At this moment, numerous bird decorations fly past his head towards the station.

"!!"

"....."

The two stiffen and hold their breaths, waiting for a few seconds for the bird decorations to pass.

---

(Can't sense any malice from these bird decorations...  
...)

Yuji makesthis conclusion, and is about to say thanks  
.....

“AH-----”

Seeing Yoshida's face in front of him, so close that their breathing are intertwined with each other, Yuji froze up.

Yoshida is also of the distance between them, her cheeks blushing. Because of her messy hair and the cold sweat clinging on her face, it looks like others will melt the moment they look at her.

“Yo, Yo---shida.....sa.....”

Yuji panics and stammers. Not only is it because he is stunned by her expression, she is also holding onto his back, not letting go. His heart beats wildly on feeling the softness of her breasts pressing against him, albeit separated by the yukata.

“Sakai-kun.....is so warm.”

Half in agony and half in joy, this voice teases Yuji's ears.

There is however a sense of danger amidst this sweetness, as Yuji tries to speak up:

"Yo, YoYo.....Yo.....Yoshida-san, now.....now at this time....."

"Really, it's still warm."

"Yoshida-san.....?"

"I have to do it now."

Yuji, blushing and speechless now, and Yoshida, who's smiling back at him—the positions of these two are completely opposite of what they normally are.

"I feel that.....I'm really weak, so, I have to do it now."  
"

"Yoshida-san?"

Yoshida's right hands moves from Yuji's back to his face.

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“‘I’ll talk about it tomorrow’, ‘I’ll find a chance next time’, ‘let’s get someone to help me’, ‘I’ll wait until the last moment’..... I always think like this when I want to run away, and in the end, I never get anything done.....”

Luckily, Yuji isn’t stupid enough to ask: “Never get what done?”

“But, I.....”

“.....Is it impossible to restore everything to normal? Is it really.....?”

It would be nice if everything can be reatored – Yuji, who’s throbbing heart could barely suppress this thought , blushes as he nods his head, almost knocking into Yoshida’s head:

“Um, it’s impossible.....to restore it. The real me is already dead. The me now isn’t human.”

Why did you die?—Yoshida restraints herself from crying, as she shakes her head:

“No, I understand, ‘The Sakai Yuji here’ is human.”

“!!”

Another blow is dealt to Yuji as he hears this positive rhetoric, stunning him. He has already discarded all hope of recognition and delight, causing him to shed tears, which flow on Yoshida's cheeks.

“I am human.....?”

Yoshida's face--- including the tears and words--- shows a smile that says that she's accepting everything, and replies:

“Yes, because your body and heart are so warm.”

Being so close until she can see the tears on his face, the girl hugs the boy tightly, her hand stroking his cheek, and in a natural tone, she says to him:





“I like, the Sakai-kun now.”

This belated confession still makes Yuji excited and sad.

He’s really happy.

Yoshida faces the youth, and once again, says in a complete sentence.

“Sakai-kun, I love you.”

The chaos involving Misaki City station has now entered a climax.

In order to form back the interfering Jizaihō, all the bird decorations for the Misago festival is gathering like bees. Once they break through, successfully completing the Jizaihō, the station’s defense complete, and the completion of the reverse seal when the professor arrives—Misaki City will definitely be destroyed. They cannot allow the enemy to succeed.

The giant made of rubble and brown flames—‘Gisō no Karite’ Khamsin swings his giant whip ‘Mekesuto’ at this

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large crowd of bird decorations that just appeared, destroying several of them at one go.

Several of these decorations got past this extremely large storm, and area about to reach the station, before being blasted to smithereens by deep blue fireballs.

The round pudgy beast, which is as blue as the fireballs, lands on top of the bus at the bus stop with a ‘bam’ sound. It opens its bloody crescent mouth, and says through its jagged teeth.

Margery reveals her face from the mouth, and in a comical manner, says grudgingly:

“Damn----it! They just keep coming!”

“Eh—hehehe! Now isn’t the time to complain about this, my multi-talented lady Margery Daw--?”

“O—kay okay! Really--!”

Responding to her partner’s urging, her face returns inside the Toca. The monster pushes it foot, as it leaps up . Without seeing, one can just sense the bird decorations getting past the massive, random and careless destruction of the giant.

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“I’ll sing the song of six pence!”

The ‘Tosatsu no sokkyou shi’ resounds inside the Toca, setting up the ‘Chōshi no Yomite’s’ Jizaihō.

“My pockets are full of wheat!”

To match Margery’s beautiful voice, Marchosias sings in a high-pitched piercing voice. The ‘Power of Existence’ surrounding them begins to shape itself according to the descriptions in the song.

Margery continues to sing:

“Twenty-four thrushes, ha!”

The power turns into countless number of bombs in the sky.

“All baked into pie, ho!”

Once Marchosias stopped singing, all the fireballs are fired, destroying all the bird decorations that Khamsin missed, including the ones fast approaching the station.

The deep blue flames surrounding the station and the giant explode, a rather magnificent scene.

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“Ah ah, since you are already so strong, you don’t have to get me involved.”

The young boy’s resonant voice came from the giant, now black all over due to the explosions.

Margery and Marchosias laugh, Margery then says:

“Of course, whatever we can hold back, we will hold back.”

“You’re not even scratched any—way, hehehe!”

Then, the two engage in a conversation only audible to them.

(Seems—like it’s impossible to destroy the reverse seal in the station first.)

(If we can hit Domino, that’s good as well----that guy is as good as its master in cleaning up everything it leaves.)

(While it’s scampering around in the station, there should be enough bird decorations for the interference...  
...this is the only method to deal with it.)

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While the two converse inside the Toca, they are jumping around freely and firing fireballs into the air. And the enemy's base is right below them, making it troublesome for them.

What's worse is that the prevention of the bird decorations from gathering to form the interference is unrelated to the most pressing issue. Once the 'Seeking Researcher' arrives, the reverse seal will cause the opposite effects of tuning to occur, leading Misaki City to its utter destruction.

(Now we can only put our hopes on that brat, thinking about it makes me sick.)

(Work hard in what's within your capabilities, then you'll find what you want to do, hehe!)

The Toca's abdomen and throat begin to swell, as it gathers energy.

(To break the deadlock, the time and energy needed are not quite enough, hehe!)

(That's—right, in this world--)

“—Bad things happen about eight or nine times out of ten!!”

Margery’s anger is converted to energy, as the beast emits raging flames from its mouth.

The deep blue flames cover the entire sky, destroying the next waves of decorations.

In the night, on the railway, the key part of the destruction, the monster train ‘Torch of the Night Party’ is fast approaching the station.

The speed did not decrease. However, it continues to accelerate as it approaches Misaki City station.

Shana, who’s pursuing from behind, fires a large bright red fireball at the professor standing on the roof of the train. The reason why she did not fire them in the beginning is because she’s not used to moving targets.

The professor leisurely looks at the fireball coming close.....

“Um----”

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He presses a button among this messy control board beside him.

Unexpectedly, a mechanical arm holding a claypot full of Chinese cooking came out from the floor beside his feet. This claypot starts to spin towards Shana, fulfilling its purpose of receiving the bright red flames, but ends up defending it all over the place.

“So—useless! This—‘Self-learning--’”

In front of this professor, who straightens himself and is about to explain the use of it.

“Ha!!”

“Wa---”

Shana flies past the flames, which is expanding due to all the explosions. In order to execute an accurate slash, she lands on the roof gracefully as she gathers her entire strength into the samurai sword, ‘Nietono no Shana’, the blade quickly passing the professor.

The roof of the ‘Torch of the Night Party’, which is carrying the two, flips like a trap mechanism in a ninja’ house.

“What?”

“Ah—”

The roof rotates, swallowing the surprised Shana and the mocking professor. The next moment, after another flip, only the professor and the controls are left, as if nothing happened on the roof.

Turns out that Shana’s the only one locked inside.

While the roof flips, Shana, who was thrown in just now, gracefully lands on the floor, and checks her surroundings.

Using just her bright hair and eyes and her bright red wings as light sources, she could faintly see the interior, one that gives a sense of being locked in a weird-shaped coffin or a jail cell.

Of course, being a Flame Haze, she’s not scared.

However, again.....

(It feels lonely.)

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Like cold wind has just blown into her heart, that icy feeling appears, making her lonely and helpless.

Until the moment when she get out and everything is alright, she feels uncertain and uneasy.

(‘If he’s not around’, I don’t want it)

Suddenly, her mind is filled with a feeble smile—at least, this is what she feels—on a boy’s face. A completely unexpected flow in her heart that even she does not understand.

(I understand it.)

Having come this far, she finally understands something.

While understanding the relationship between Yuji and Yoshida, at the same time, at the same time, the fact that Yuji’s far away from her gives her a sense of unbearable loneliness. Making sure that Yuji understands her own standpoint makes her even lonelier when he’s not around.

(If ‘Yuji’s not here’, I don’t want--)

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That strong anger-like ‘uncontrollable feeling’ rages within her. In the past, it’s like a passion, that feeling that boils when she likes something; but today, it’s completely cold now, tormenting everything.

Like what happened tonight, when Yoshida Kazumi made the first move.

(--Yuji, stay with me, don’t be with Yoshida Kazumi, be with me--)

Shana thinks like a child trying to gain attention. At this moment, a voice from her chest stops her runaway trail of thoughts.

“Shana.”

“—!”

Lost in her own thoughts for a few seconds, Shana awakens from her illogical delusions.

After waking up, she bores a strong hatred at this high wall surrounding her.

This is the wall getting between her and Yuji.

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She must get past it, eradicate the enemy and get back as soon as possible.

Must not let Yuji and Yoshida Kazumi be together.

It's not just because of the mission of the Flame Haze, as there are other impure motives, hatred, not anger, rages inside her. Her strong, burning self looks similar compared to past occasions, but is not.

The bright red colour of her eyes and hair are now even more dazzling.

Even her breathing becomes firedust.

A shocking power rages within her.

“Destroy ‘everything’.....!!”

Muttering softly in a strange deep voice, she changes her feelings into a bright red large scale explosion.

“Hm—hmhmhm!”

The ‘Torch of the Night Party’ experiences some shocks, due to the strong and unavoidable shockwaves from the explosions inside , but it isn’t destroyed.

Not only that, the flames move from the front to the back of the car, lighting and expanding it like a relay marker. Flames begin to generate from the wheels, which is spinning rapidly. The back of the train has something shooting out like a rocket.

“Um—hohoho!”

These are Shana’s bright red flames.

The ‘Torch of the Night Party’ continues to accelerate.

The professor, who’s standing on the rooftop, raises and shakes his shoulders. The bumpiness causes him to raise his chin. He shouts.

“Ah---Recha-----rge OK-----!”

Pachoo--! The sound of the whistle is now mixed with bright red firedust, making an even louder sound.

Everything and anything is all developing—more accurately, it's 'almost complete' -- just as planned. Even using the power of the Flame Haze as energy, the train speeds forward and makes the final run towards the destination that is now visible, Misaki City station, where the explosions and noise can be heard around it.

Suddenly, Yoshida Kazumi senses that Sakai Yuji, who's almost within a nose's reach in front of her, is now distracted.

She understands that he senses something that she cannot sense, that is, the presence of the other girl.

"Is it Shana?"

"Ah....."

Yuji feels that to this girl who already confessed to him, his actions are an insult to her, thus, he looks remorseful. He did not try to hide this critical area, apologising instead:

"Sor, sorry."

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“No problem.”

The honest attitude of the boy makes Yoshida feel like she just found the dime that she lost, she laughs:

“I’m the one who should say sorry…….I’m clear that, now isn’t the time to do ‘that sort of thing’. But, I still want to say it. And only now, can I do it.”

“……”

Yuji does not know how to answer her.

To be honest, he’s mentally unprepared, and because they’re in the midst of a battle, he cannot calm himself down. If it were a movie, after embracing each other, they’ll probably exchange a passionate kiss. However, things aren’t that simple. It won’t end happily ever after, as there’s still the irritating ‘coming up next’ waiting for them. He cannot be affected by that false image and act impulsively.

Seeing him being so troubled, Yoshida did not force an answer.

Although there is the urge to trouble him, she barely kept it down. Like what they are doing now (if based on

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the result), someone is still fighting for them out there, and Yuji knows this. Even if it is a strong urge, choosing to confess at this moment highlights her thoughtlessness. At least this is what the girl with a serious personality thinks.

However, she still wishes to be a bit wilful in her methods. The hand which was stroking Yuji's face is now behind his back, as Yoshida hugs him even tightly.

"Yoshida.....Yoshida-san!?"

"Can you help me up?"

She whispers softly, her face now close to the boy's burning face.

The impact caused by the sight of the reverse seal is now weaker, but the physical and mental fatigue that occurs to her now means that Yoshida cannot move her hands or legs..

"Uh, ah, Um!"

Yuji answers in an unresponsive tone, letting the girl lying below to rest on him, and carry her up.

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Then, while he is finally ready to pull the distance between them, Yoshida again says:

“Can I hold your hand.....?”

“Uh, um.”

The soft and small hand carefully holds Yuji’s hand.

This touch makes Yuji’s heart beat even faster, but he still continues to look towards Misaki City station, which isn’t far away from here.

In front of him is a shocking scene, Khamsin is still controlling the giant, swinging the whip around, Margery causing explosions with her flames. Yoshida is right, now isn’t the time for this.

Looking at this for several seconds, Yoshida’s gaze is still fixated on the battlefield, as she mutters:

“Sakai-kun, you and Shana.....”

“Eh?”

“.....Nothing, never mind.”

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This attitude is not due to hesitation caused by fear and nothing knowing what to do, but rather, being confident in her view that she will not get an answer. This force that grips tightly isn't one of trust, but a sign that she isn't going to give up.

Yuji, and even Yoshida herself can feel this.

(To Shana.....)

Being asked, Yuji ponders again.

Because he's staring at this scene in front of him, and also because Yoshida is holding his hand.

He started thinking about the girl fighting bravely in this scene, and, it's nobody's issue but himself.

(What do I feel ..... about Shana?)

It seems like a question he just thought of, and also a serious one.

Of course, he doesn't want her to hate him, and even wants her to like him, to gain her trust.

Hoping that the two can work together, build up a good chemistry, up till now—that's a dream-like hope.

However, is this feeling the same as that love when Yoshida confesses to him? Thinking about it, love, what sort of 'feeling' is it? Is it love between him and Shana? Who can help him answer this question?

How does he feel towards Shana?

The reason he feels guilty towards Yoshida before, is because he's unclear of this feeling. He even feels that he did something wrong to her.

(Then, what about Shana.....does she feel the same towards me?)

Within the heart of this boy, are unconfirmed, unproven and ambiguous feelings.

Yoshida remains silent as she holds Yuji's hand tightly.

At this moment, the other two guys—Satou and Tanaka—are looking at the two of them from behind, and timed their best moment of entry.

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“Seems like we saw something really big.....what should we do now?”

“Anyway.....how about a cough before we enter?”

The destroyed front part of the train is now approaching Misaki City station.

“Do—you hear the whistle that signify our vic—tory? Do—mino--!?”

The professor stands on the ‘Torch of the Night Party’, which is now travelling at wind-breaking speed, speaking into the manhole beside him, the self-crystallization of outstanding No. 7931—‘Calling of the messenger’.

“Yes--! I hear it----I see it----! It’s coming (it hurts it hurts!)”

The professor twists Domino through another communicator, and turns to look in front.

“Why aren’t--the self-crystallization of outstanding No .29147—‘the confused bird gathered for interference?’”

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“(I’m sorry)! But you can see it right? Because of the Flame Hazes, the notorious killer and the mass destroyer, we can’t gather them all (It HUUUUURRRRRRTTTTTTTSSSSSSS!!!!)”

“Hm—if I had known, I wouldn’t have fir--ed that Sabrac--!”

Forget—about that guy, please hurry—“

Kachunk!

“Hm--?”

Following this weird sound, the communication broke down. He thought that something strange happened to the station, but looking at it, the station isn’t badly damaged.

“Hm um--?”

The professor looks around him, unable to refrain from leaning his head.

A sharp metal object pierces out in the middle of the ‘Call of the Messenger’. After that, it crackles, emitting bright red sparks. The ‘Torch of the Night Party’ speeds

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up again. The sharp metal object keeps drilling like its digging for something, before shrinking back in.

“Hm—”

The professor pushes his glasses with his hand, looking at the side of the moving train.

From the bright red energy flowing from the exposed parts of the machinery, the sharp metal object pierces out again. Seems like a certain pipeline is damaged, causing a sudden burst of steam.

It is at this point, that the professor realises that it is the samurai sword on the Flame Haze’s hands, which he used as fuel.

“Ah, n—ow you’re in—tending to destroy my ‘Torch of the Night Party’? Keep doing these use--less things that wastes your energy, how’s this?”

The professor forcefully pulls the lever beside him, preparing to suppress the uprising of this naughty ‘fuel’.

Then, from below, the girl’s piercing screams and the clanging noise caused by the slashing can be heard.

As if turning the sound into some reality, two wheels begin emitting pale green sparks before coming off. Unable to bear the weight of the train, together with the noise caused by the irregular actions, the train starts rocking.

The professor continues to twist his neck on the shaking train.

“Hm----? Even though she’s a little girl, but these 500 delicately crafted and extremely offensive ‘Self-crystallisation of outstanding no. 29004—Caterpillar bomb’ seems to have the oppo—site effect! (It hhuurrrttts !)”

He bit his own tongue while talking; his sharp eyes beneath his glasses are bent with joy.

“Come—on! ‘Torch of the Night Party’, just a lit—tle more will you--? Because the fru—it of our experiment is right there--!!”

The sharp front of the train starts glowing. It’s a defensive Jizaishiki that prevents anyone from coming close. Like an eye-catching neon red light sign, the train continues speeding on the track in the night.

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Of course, the professor understands, reaching the destination would mean his self-destruction.

However, the main point is, do first before talking.

“This—is an experiment! This—is exploration! My one step! Anytime, anywhere, actually understands, gli—tter!”

The professor bit his tongue again, thus he crouched down.

The ‘Torch of the Night Party’ now has a girl making a ruckus inside, sparks and steam being emitted as it moves at full speed.

The distance to Misaki City station is now several hundred metres now.

Covered in the Toca, Margery leaps onto the top of the station.

Revealing her extremely cross face, her eyebrows squeezed so tightly, she bellows:

“Ah--! This is frustrating! What is that brat doing!?”

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Looking from their position, the strange train which acts as the key part to activating the reverse seal is now within distance. From far, one can see the train shaking, damaged all over, but they can't see the most important 'Enpatsu Shakugan no Uchite'.

"Aiya? She's still inside, but it doesn't seem—like she's giving in."

The Toca raises its bear-like arms, roughly scratching the flame fur that couldn't possibly be messy.

"Block, destroy, stop—no matter the method, there should be some interference."

"That's true—because this is the point where one really needs to up their guard."

The notorious killer among the Flame Haze uses this opportunity to fire fireballs at the bird decorations that Khamsin missed, without missing, while thinking:

(Destroy everything? In one strike? What's the situation? What's the Advantages? What's the Disadvantages? Features of the enemy----

"----Ah ah!?"



‘Thunk’ , she claps her hands, leaping above the station.

“Old geezer! Destroy everything!”

“What! To destroy both Domino and that muddle-headed professor—”

“NO! Destroy the viaduct and the track! Destroy them all!”

Hearing these instructions, the youth with the old voice says:

“Ah ah, I see--!!”

Saying this, his giant body flies high into the sky.

“Hm, take this! Fist of Atem!”

The giant extends the arm not holding the whip, locking onto the target in mid-air. ‘Boom’, brown flames are emitted as the giant’s arm, from the elbow to the fist, is fired like a rocket, accurately hitting the viaduct

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leading to Misaki City station, where the ‘Torch of the Night Party’ is on as it moves towards Misaki City station.

With such a large impact caused by the hit and explosions, the viaduct, together with the concrete piers below it, are smashed in one hit. After the flames and dust appear, one can see within distance of the station a cliff that can make the ‘Torch of the Night Party’ fall.

One can see the ‘Seeking Researcher’ Dantalion—the professor screaming:

“Hea—vens!! Look—what you—done-----!?”

If it were a direct attack on the ‘Torch of the Night Party’ itself, like the giant’s punch just now, the professor believes that he can handle it. But once the railtracks are destroyed, even he can’t do anything.....

Definitely not.

“-----However!!”

On the top of the ‘Torch of the Night Party’, which is descending to hell, the professor shouts out, though nobody is listening to his own description of this adversity.

“I had—expected something—like this to happen! Acti—vate!!”

Doing a graceful spin for no good reason, the professor presses the big button right in the middle of the control panel.

Margery and Marchosias, who are in mid-air, are expecting this strange train to fall, however.....

“Eh!?”

“Wa!?”

The two are shocked.

A sharp, piercing rotating sound came from the sides of the ‘Torch of the Night Party’, revealing fins like those of a missile. The ‘fuel’ inside seems to have stopped

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giving out energy, thus the strong pale green flames, which signifies the professor's own strength, shoots out from the rear.

"F—ly! 'Self-crystallization of outstanding No.29182—Torch of the Night party'!"

Breaking away from the rails, off the edge of the broken viaduct like a snowboarder surfing off a ramp in a competition, the strange train flies in a magnificent manner in the air towards the destination with the entrance wide open—the platform of Misaki City station.

"——E——xciting!! E——xcellent!! Look! The world is so beautiful!!"

The professor shouts his thoughts out regarding this scene which he's about to leave from, preparing to gain satisfaction from the distorted looks of the dumbstruck and defeated Flame Hazes (Although he can't see them.)

.....

"Eh----?"

He senses that the trajectory seems to be moving upwards.

This soon became obvious.

His range of vision is moving upwards.

“What’s going on?”

From his position, the professor can’t see it.

He can’t see a thin but strong arm stretched out from the bottom of the monster train ‘Torch of the Night Party’—because in order to infuse energy into the samurai sword, she has to stretch her hand outwards from the bottom—emitting a stunningly large amount of red flames .

“Ooooooooo!?”

The ‘Torch of the Night Party’, which is pushed by such a large force, undergoes a 180 degrees flip, ending up being upside down.

“Aiyo—Heya--!”

The professor falls into the rubble of the destroyed viaduct below him.

The bottom of the ‘Torch of the Night Party’ is hacked through in mid-air, as a girl who looks angry and about to cry flies out of it.

“Damn it, damn it—”

That girl—Shana tries desperately to burn the worms gathering on her, muttering, her dry hair standing. Then, the sound of metal rubbing together can be heard from the ‘Torch of the Night Party’, which looks like it fell off the girl. Of course, it’s falling onto the professor.

“Wa--!?”

“Bam”, the train relentlessly crashes on its owner.

Even more unforgiving, Shana shouts, pointing the ‘Nietono no Shana’ downwards:

“You bastard who do not want your own life--!!”



A shocking burning sound that sounds like explosions is heard as the bright red rage channels through the blade as it lands. It would be more accurate to describe it as burning than explosions. One strike is enough to turn the train, called impregnable, to be reduced to its frame.

“Pro, professor!!”

Domino, who only has its head left, screams from inside the station.

“Please restrain your grief.”

“I advise you to follow, hehe!”

The ‘Chōshi no Yomite’, who took advantage of this chaos and got in, fires an extra large fireball behind him.

“---AIYOWEIAH!?”

The fireball directly hits Domino, who’s making funny screams, sending him flying off the second level of Misaki City station with an explosion together with the reverse seal.

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Once confirmed that that flame signifies the end of this hard fought victory, Shana, who's floating in mid-air, reveals a look of dissatisfaction. She looks around frantically for any worms crawling around. As if she finally realises something, Shana turns and ask:

“.....Why didn't I use those wings to fly from the beginning?”

“Maybe you wanted to come up with something unexpected and fly in front of everyone.”

Alastor answers apathetically, one of the rare chances he gets to do so.

Far away, at Hakurei station, the disturbance caused by the strange train finally settles.

Right in the middle of the station, is a circular crater in the compartment from the ‘Torch of the Night Party’. Plastic tape surrounds this station, which had several occurrences, preventing people from entering the station, leaving behind a dark and large hole.

At this moment, a pale green glow suddenly appears within the empty engine room.

“Ugh--! That was a --close one--!”

Pushing aside the manhole nailed on one side in the compartment, the professor comes out from ‘the hole that originally never existed.’

"If that ‘Torch of the Night Party’ didn’t fall directly on me, I would not be able to use the Self-crystallization of outstanding No. 7931—‘Calling of the messenger’ and get away from death."

Including his cloak, the professor’s entire body is covered black, half of his hair looks like it exploded.

“Now—what went wrong?”

The professor tilts his head, not understanding why. Domino, who only has its head left, follows and jumps outside.

“Three Flame Hazes.....And they’re the renowned killer, the destroyer, and even a true Crimson Lord is around, they’re practically monsters. Being able to come back in one piece is a miracle (its Hurts!)--!

The professor uses the transformed mechanical arm to twist his assistant’s cheeks, which only has its head left.

“Do—mino--! Are cowardly people who are afraid of death—worthy to carry out experiments?”

“(I’m sorry! I’m Sorry!)

After a while, the professor lets go, and without any longing, his mind proceeds on to the next experiment. He never ever stops. He takes out a journal from the pile of tools tie together by a rope in front of his chest, and flips through the contents.

“Hm--! Then on to next ex—peri—ment! First, the newest.....super awesome universally undefeatable banana skin—”

“Aiya, I finally found you.”

Suddenly, a voice came from above them.

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A wonderful and delightful lady's voice with a cold and ruthless presence.

"Hm--?"

"Wa?"

When the two look up from the compartment on the ground, there is a figure of a woman with the night sky behind her.

One look is enough to show that this person is no ordinary person, a lady with a slender body with her tight-fitting knee-length skirt floating, because that long chain item is wiggling around her.

Domino takes a deep breath:

"Ah! The Strategist!? Proproporprofessor.....wewewe been found (it hurts! It hurts!)

The professor twists his panicky assistant, and stares silently at this lady called the strategist.

"Professor, how did you come to such a far place? If I hadn't met 'Sabrac' and learnt your whereabouts, I wouldn't have known where to look from."

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Hearing the lady's words, the peerless professor finally reveals a troubled look as he answers:

"Hm--! I should have known not to fi—re that guy!"

The muttering of the professor made the lady giggle, as she steps into mid-air. The chain surrounding her immediately moves below her feet, forming a staircase.

The lady, bathed in moonlight, quickly arrives in front of the two of them.

Under the moonlight, a youthful and beautiful lady is dressed in a gray, tight-fitting dress, and has several pieces of jewellery on her.



However, there is an eyepatch over her right eye.

But she's looking at the other party with two eyes.

Meaning, she has three eyes.

The two golden eyes on her forehead and the left side of her face, which are brighter than the moonlight, gazes towards the professor rather cheekily:

"Now that the experiment is over, is it possible for you to help us now?"

"Hm—! Bal Masqué--? I'm no longer interested in the 'Seireiden' and the 'Tyrant'--?"

"We might get the Reiji Maigo this time, how about it?"

Under the exploded head of the professor, the glasses shine.

"Do—mino--! What are you wasting—time for--!? Hurry up and keep these tools! Get to work!"

“What--!? But, but professor, didn’t you say that Bal Masqué and Sabrac are more irritating than mushrooms (It hurts it hurts)!”

“Occa—sionally carrying--out experiments for other people and changing—mindsets is very—meaningful!”

The professor twists Domino with one hand, putting his glasses near the beauty as he speaks:

“No matter what, since it’s from ‘Arbiter of Reverse Reasoning’ Bel Peol—one of the trinity of Bal Masqué, ‘I definitely cannot believe it’! However, I—know you won’t come out with a meaningless ba—it, right?”

The lady called Bel Peol reveals a slight smile, not giving an answer.



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## Epilogue

“Yukari-chan, from today onwards, I’m calling you ‘Shana’.”

Yoshida Kazumi did not intend to declare war like before.

“Ngh.”

Khamsin again smoothly completes his tuning work. There was a lot of damage done in this battle without the ‘Fūzetsu’ set up, but Khamsin dismisses this issue by saying that humans would clean up the aftermath and clean up the mess. Margery did not like that, stating that they should contact Outlaw first, and get finances ‘that the Flame Hazes should have’. However, tuning is all they could do here.

And the most frustrating thing is, Khamsin’s proposals are always correct.

“In fact, I always feel it.”

Facing this unusually calm girl, Shana pretends to look calm while actually trembling inside.

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"Feel what?"

It's not a physical restoration, but a repair of the distortion to how it was before. To the naked eye, there's no change, but Yuji, and even Satou and Tanaka can feel it.

With help from Yoshida's imagination, Misaki City was restored as the distortions have been corrected. Now from the department store overlooking the night sky, they could feel happiness and sadness intertwined in their hometown, as everything is restored to its peaceful self. The distortion brought by everyone's 'Did this happen?' feelings has disappeared.

"There is something invisible between Sakai-kun and Yu—Shana that I'm worried about."

Yoshida could now understand the reason of her fear—she fears that Yuji would be taken away.

"Really?"

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Khamsin, who has finished the tuning, expressed that he would be leaving the city when everything's over. Hearing it, only Yoshida bemoaned about it. Everyone else, on hearing that this veteran Flame Haze is leaving, declared: He's reliable when he does his job, but they don't want to rely on him; his advice is always accurate, but he's really unsociable---- these are really ambiguous expressions.

He told Alastor that after leaving this city, he will investigate some things and collect information from Outlaw. The Flame Hazes understood the profound meaning behind it, and are serious about it.

"I feel that you two must have some sort of special relationship that I don't know about, and I'm envious about it."

Yoshida Kazumi is no longer a weakling. She's a real, strong enemy that can take Yuji away.

"It's not like this."

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Margery uses the danger which she explained to Alastor as a reason, telling her two followers that she will be staying at Satou's house a little longer.

Satou and Tanaka were jubilant as they danced and jumped around, ending up with Marchosias mocking them and Margery rebuking them.

In addition, due to this incident, Margery felt that the 'Blutsauger' is considered excessive. Thus, she handed the sword to Shana. The two attendants feel that it's a waste, but they then begin to reconsider other aspects in which they can provide assistance.

"No, no, it's nothing special; we're on the same side. I now finally understand that you two have a relationship during this time where ordinary people do not see you."

However, Shana's heart is covered by a deeper fear.

".....So, what on Earth are you trying to say?"

Yuji and Shana then re-discussed, and decided to

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temporarily stay in Misaki City. As an unnatural existence among humans, 'stuck in the present and without a future', Yuji laughed. Satou, Tanaka and Yoshida could only remain silent.

Because they do not know what to say.

"So, what I want to say is....."

She fears that in this war, with a target now, she has changed.

"....."

Next, Shana has her biggest problem.

Regarding the disheveled yukata, dilapidated due to all the fighting, and especially with the last 'attack' that would make anyone cringe, how can she explain it to the owner, Chigusa? It is a really tough problem, even Yuji could not think of a good idea. Khamsin and Margery were indifferent regarding this matter, so Shana, together with the demon within her, have a headache regarding this.

"So now, I'm really on equal terms with Shana now."

That fear is the notion of not giving up this battle, there is absolutely no way will she give up.

"... .. I, I ... .."

However, there is an unexpected savior at this moment.

That's Yoshida Kazumi, and she came up with a brilliant plan. She only needs to explain that she got involved with a group of bad guys, and Shana came to her rescue, starting a scuffle. In order to make it realistic, both have to wear damaged yukatas, Satou and Tanaka will participate and testify for them.

So now, Yoshida is dressing Shana up, grooming her to an extent where she can at least go outside without looking too shabby.

"Then, there is one thing, I - 'said it out'."

"--!!"

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At the top of the department store, not letting anyone see them, the two girls stared at each other in a secret area.

The weak girl is no longer fearful and will not back down.

No matter how anyone threaten or deny her, the strong girl will not be stopped.

The two girls are now on completely equal ground.

They stare at each other's eyes for a few seconds. Yoshida then reveals her usual smile.....

"Well, let's go! Shana."

A closer look, the collar is neatly arranged, the tying of the belt around her waist is now a lot better.

"Ah....."

Shana could only walk in front of the mirror reflecting her image.

She's helpless. She did not know what to do. What should she do?

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To win the war, to win the chance to be with the boy, she could only take initiative.

However, she would have to change the way she is accustomed to living, which scares her.

She's frightened by the even stronger notion that, even if she's scared, she will not give up on him.

Now trembling with fear, facing her enemy's back, she can only say her thoughts.

"I like Yuji."

However, once the opponent heard this, she did not waver or panic.

"Ah, I know."

That girl, the tough and strong opponent—Yoshida Kazumi, turned around and says, seemingly blocking Shana.

"I also like Sakai-kun."



Amidst these shattered lives, they continue to move forward.

Embracing joy, accompanied by sorrow, and revealing their confusion.

The World has everything, and continues to rotate without changing.

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## Author's Notes

To the first time readers, we've met for the first time.

To the readers who I haven't met in a long time, it's been a while.

I'm Takahashi Yashichiro

I'm really delighted to be able to meet everyone again.

Speaking of which, the current book is a thrilling action novel. Just kidding, there's no action scene. I tried. Is it alright?

Regarding the main theme, the content that illustrates the 'can I say it? Can I not say it' is 'choice'. Different people in different situations being forced into a dilemma .

Miki-sensei who's in charge of printing has a lot of ideas, often coming up with many changes—like that opening, and that extra space—to entertain the readers. This time, both sides fired cannon shots, and the result is—water (I'll omit the rest).

Miss Ito Noiiji, who's in charge of illustrations, is an illustrator full of vigor. 'Tenmoku Ikko' and 'Merihim' were a lot more cooler and handsome than I expected. I'm really looking forward to the insert illustrations column in the follow-up. I thank you again for putting in your great effort.

In order of county name pronunciation, reader H-tachi from Aichi prefecture, readers A-ki and S-san from Okayama prefecture, reader H-ryuu from Kagoshima prefecture, readers T-zuka and Y-kura from Kanagawa, reader M-hayashi from Kyoto, reader S-mada from Hyogo, I'll like to thank these readers who often send mail or sent mail to me for the first time to encourage me.

Next, I'll continue to fill up this casual talk page. For the movie, the realistic and sincere presentation of the bomberman rockets touched me to tears. In terms of reading, I picked up on Mr Poet's Noboribetsu that I abandoned a long time ago, and again felt the impact of words. For manga, I stared at the grimy mix of gentleness and violence, and that made me peaceful. The next time, the poetic and faithful magic explosion will display even more excitement, more violent language

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that will touch people to tears and calm them. (All these were all made up)

Just like that, I finally managed to complete the layout. I will continue to work hard in the future (for what?)

To the readers of this book, I'll again show my inadequate appreciation.

I hope we have a chance to meet again.

Year 2003, July.

Takahashi Yashichiro

## Translator's Notes and References

### Chapter 1 - Initiation

#### Misago

The Misago, or [\[1\]](#) is basically a sea hawk.

### Chapter 4 - Excitement

#### Seal

The seal here does not refer to the Fūzetsu. The kanji here uses 封, not .

#### Gravel Of Ra

Note that in the chinese translation, it is called '太'. Ra here being the Egyptian god of the sun.

